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THE FRAGRANT GARLAND

(Biographical Dictionary
of
Carnatic Composers & Musicians)
(Book IV)

By

N. RAJAGOPALAN

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1996

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'Rajagopalan sacrificed a remunerative job years back to take up this pioneering work which governments and universities should have undertaken. He has covered an astounding number of composers and musicians which should inspire... Meritorious work... Rajagopalan is to be congratulated.'

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Dr. Semmangudi R. Srinivasier,
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'In 1990, N. Rajagopalan created history by publishing *"A Garland"* hailed as a gargantuan project by the music world. It was a thesaurus... It surpassed all earlier works by its comprehensiveness... The profiles are critical appraisals of musicians written with an enviable freshness of language... delightful reading...'

- T.S. Parthasarathy

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By

N. RAJAGOPALAN, I.A.S. (Rtd.)

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CARNATIC CLASSICALS
3, 24th Cross Street, Indira Nagar,
Chennai-600 020, India. (Ph:417196)

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Prayer

Ragam : Dwijāvanti — *Tala : Rūpakam*
Mēlakarta : 28 — *Composer : Veenai Sesha Ayyar*

Pallavi

Vighnēśwara mukha kamalam viharati sadā mama hṛdayē

(Vighnēśwara)

Anupallavi

Viśwarūpa virūpākṣam – Vinaya guṇātiśaya śīlam

(Vighnēśwara)

Charanam

1. *Vighna nivāraṇa cinmaya rūpam – Vilasita sōmam - Varapradakāmam*
   Viprasrēṣtha Dēva gaṇādhipatim – Viśruta Vēdāgama sūtradhārim.

Madhyamakālam

Vāraṇa vadanam sumukham – valayita śṛutajana śōka nivāraṇa viduram varadam – Vallabhāśliṣṭa santuṣṭam

(Vighnēśwara)

2. *Viśwa vimōhana mōdaka hastam – Viśeṣa kāvya vitaraṇa śaturam*
   Viśiṣṭa Dēvādidēva pūjitam – Viśwāmbhara mūrtē pālayamām

Madhyamakālam

Vikaṭam viśwarakṣakṛtē Vighnarājam smarāmi
Virājitapatē Dēvam Viśweśwara sutam bhāvayē!

(Vighnēśwara)

OM

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PREFACE

"Posterity will surely be grateful to you for your *Garlands* which adorn the neck of Sri Matangi Devi, the Goddess of Music. God seems to get specified jobs done by His chosen people!"

So wrote T.S. Parthasarathy, the eminent musicologist and Secretary, Music Academy, Madras on July 6, 1992. When I commenced the *yagna* of bringing out the first-ever Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers and Musicians of the past and the present in english uninhibited by constraints of geography, race, caste or creed in 1988. I was not fully aware of the full implications. I had not the remotest idea, nor was ever there the possibility, of my pursuing relentlessly this massive and multi-dimensional work of bringing out such a publication. The need for such a book has been felt for long and if it has been the Divine will as T.S. Parthasarathy avers that I should take it up, who else could?

This assumes particular significance in the context of men of eminence having made references to the lives of some composers and musicians though very briefly in their works. The venerable Subbarama Dikshitar, author of *Sangita Sampradāya Pradarśini,* the eminent Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, father of Tamil Research, M. Abraham Panditar, author of the colossal work *Karnāmṛta Sāgaram,* Prof. P. Sambamurti and Dr. V.S. Sampathkumaracharya had all moved in the direction in some way or other but in a highly restricted way.

Bernard M. Baruch said:

'Millions said that apples fall, but
Newton was the one to ask why'.

In this view, again, one has to accept the statement of T.S. Parthasarathy. I offer my humble thanks to the Lord for having selected me among the millions of robust souls that inhabit this planet and entrusted the arduous task. I do not have the merit to approach anywhere near the himalayan stature of the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru but none need grudge me the opportunity to avail of a passage from his song *Daya Jūchuṭa kidi vēḷara (Gānavāridhi)* which marks a watershed in his effulgent life (and incidentally mine too):

'Munu nīvānaticchina
Panulāsakoni nē
Manasāraga nidānamuga
Salpinānu.'

'As ordained by You earlier,
I have carried out my duty
with love and dedication and
without undue hurry.'

* *

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The *Garland* series cover as many as one thousand four hundred lives and rightly the pioneering work has been described as a 'treasure-house of information', 'a source book' and a 'vital book of reference'. There is none else of such magnitude and perhaps there may be none! Sunil Gavaskar proudly claimed that he was the first to reach the ten-thousand runs mark but Allan Border crossed it soon after and it may be a distant day for any to break it! They say records are meant to be broken! How I wish that the record of the *Garlands* is broken!

It has indeed been a challenging herculean task to do the job alone, like the proverbial Ēkantapuram Station Master, without help - governmental or institutional, monetary and secretarial. By its nature, the work is one of colossal dimensions involving heavy correspondence, visits, contacts, etc. Artistes too have little time to respond to requests. The four volumes have consumed nine years of my brief tenancy on this great land, the Bharat!

Science or Art, nothing attains its *sampūrṇatvam,* culmination of glory, acme of excellence or the grandeur of its inherent sublimity in the absence of great masters, maestros and wizards who contribute its soul and substance. One lacks the will to ignore the urge to admire once more their enduring contribution and the effulgent legacy they have graciously legated. (Do not rasikas relive the experience of an enthralling concert and do they not long to hear their favourite artiste sing a particular piece over and over again? Does not Nandanar of Gopalakrishna Bharati long and sing for just another vision of the Lord - yes, just one more!) Not that what had been said earlier was defective but what has already been said just tickles the conscience to feel that sufficient story had not been reeled out yet and it yearns for more! God is one, religions protest; but does not man create different gods highlighting individual aspects of his choice with appropriate but distinct architecture, sculpture, mode of services and festivals, etc.? Even so, the lives of a few, who have left impressionable imprints in the sphere of the oldest living science and art and without whose advents art would have surely been the poorer, find a place herein but from different angles.

There has often been a suggestion to limit the dictionary to the all-time greats and the stalwarts of the day only. But it is unfair to exclude those in the second-line who are to ascend the ladder to occupy the top slots tomorrow. It is also a perplexing job to draw the dividing line. What is popular may not also be the traditional. Audience-response too gives little guidance. Critics laud the performance of most of them even as they express their dismay at and lament vociferously over the fall in standards! Some musicians give prominence to *lakshana* while others to *lakshya.* Some suggested separate volumes for composers and for musicians. Were Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Patnam Subramania Ayyar and the like composers or performing artistes? The same

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issue confronts many cases such as those of Gopalakrishna Bharati, Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Thanjavur Sankara Ayyar and scores of multi-dimensional lives. Thus the suggested classification has not been found easy to implement.

***

The society owes a deep debt of gratitude to those masters of the glittering galaxy of the past who rejuvenated and revitalised the art from time to time ignoring personal pangs and pains, hunger and privations in a greater or lesser degree. What were their lives like? It was succinctly described by Sangita Kalanidhi T. Chowdiah that many villages had boasted of musicians of eminence but that many of them did not know where the next meal would come from! Simizhi Sundaram Ayyar and many others are hailed as titans but they were all left severely alone. Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar was described by Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar as 'musician of musicians' but the hard fact remains that he was not supported well. The Prince of Karnataka vainikas, Shamanna in his early days had 'roamed about the streets carrying the vina on his shoulders (like wood-cutters and ploughmen) looking for homes with festoons for a chance invitation to play!' What had Tyagaraja or Dikshitar got in material terms for the glittering legacy they have left behind? Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar starved to preserve and insure his golden voice though he could have commanded a royal table. What were indeed the private lives of Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati or of his mentor Gopalakrishna Bharati like? Their cerebral and effulgent poetical and musical fires had learnt to stifle the pangs of physical hunger and wants. Of course, conditions were similar and perhaps worse in the West too. Mozart could not provide for a decent burial to his beloved nor for his own but his manuscripts were sold for a hefty £ 2585000 recently! Beethoven did not stir out of his house for days since his only pair of shoes needed repair! The simple lives of most musicians and composers did not see milk and honey flowing in their homes. Musical affluence was in inverse proportion to material prosperity. And they bore with equanimity all sufferings to promote, enrich and ennoble art; (it was all *Kriṣṇārpaṇam*) and they knew not what else to do! Their commitment and marriage to the fine art were as irrevocable as hindu marriages were then! How many Tyagarajas, Dikshitars, Bharatis and Rajarathinams should have languished in chill penury! Why all the *jayantis, ārādhanās,* etc. now? One sees fascinating photos with **fragrant garlands** on and witnesses memorial functions aesthetically arranged. Pious tributes are paid since man has not learnt of any other mode or means of honouring and remembering the remarkable legacy of the great and discharging the deep debt of gratitude he owes! 'On some fond breasts the departed souls rely! Some pious drops the departed require! Large was their bounty and their souls sincere. They gave to

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art all they had and perhaps they gained from Heaven **(was it all they wished?)** immortality and a silent rest!' (Thomas Gray as modified.) I have hastened to include as many of the past veterans as possible before the ravages of man, memory and time obliterate the frugal information now available. They canalised their energies and the glittering ingenuous flame in them to promote sublime, soulful music, gracious arts, emotion-packed paintings and speaking sculptures, ageless architecture, etc. What a magnificent array of creative assets have they legated!

***

Mercifully the panorama has changed radically for the better. Some have reached the sanctum of Fame and Glory while others are chasing the clock and calender to attain the same. Some are blessed by the Omnipresent to reach the Hall of Fame quickly. Was not Avvaiyar taken to Kailas by Lord Ganesa in a trice while those who started earlier were still struggling to cross rivers and scale mountains! Does not the Bhiṣma of Carnatic music often say that he was so blessed? Has not Sadasivam's destined entry into the remarkable life of the Queen of Melody, Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi significantly helped the cause of melody and charity and take our music to the United Nations?

Opportunities have increased; corporate assistance has come to stay; tastes and expectations are changing; applauses are generously dished out; competition however is stiff. Those who believe in *nābhi, hṛt, kaṇṭha and rasana* probably find those who lay faith on *rasana* alone prospering and know not whether, and if so, how to bend! Several popular young artistes have one leg in jobs and are part-time musicians. Official patronage has a say in musical prosperity of many. Whether such a situation helps the future and the cause of art and whether it does not handicap full-timers are issues for earnest thought.

The massive exodus of musicians from rural areas mostly to the metropolis and a few cities elsewhere has positively eroded into the health and growth of classical music. Such urban places have become monopolistic sanctuaries of musicians and there is little music in rural places (villages or towns) which had nursed and nurtured the art for millennia. With temple music a thing of the past, with sabhas and training centres clustering around bigger urban centres, the departure of musicians, in the additional context of the decline of dramas and nagaswara, has left rural areas totally starved of classical music. Areas which witnessed an abundance of apprentices practising, temples overflowing with, and dramas pouring out classical music from morn to night mostly stand switched over to music other than the classical. Thus the vast majority of the population has now no exposure to Classical Carnatic music, which lie centred like monsoon depressions in the bay at select urban centres - perhaps not

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exceeding a dozen or two in the whole of the South - each with its area of influence covering a radius of just a kilometer or two! The number of concerts is not at all the criterion for the health of the art. It is the geographical presence of the art that shall settle its future. Concerts help the artistes; geographical spread helps the art! A close check-up would reveal that even the combined strength of the audience - regular and occasional - would not exceed a few thousands in the City of Madras. (Of course, quite a few may avail of the radio, television, cassettes, etc.) This closed circle of rasikas seems **inelastic** too! **Surely this is dangerous portent!**

Knowledgeable authorities do lament, perhaps in fits and starts, like some politicians not in power preaching political, economic and social *Gitas,* on the progressive decline and deterioration in standards and poverty of inspired, intuitive and memorable *manodharmic* music. But what is the follow-up and where is the social or political will to remedy and rectify? Preaching without positive remedial action is worse than *de-facto* fall in standards as it tends to warn wavering youngsters not to lay faith in the supposedly tottering art or come anywhere near it. Preaching without reformation demoralises hastening the galloping decline in the strength of rasikas and the steady increase in the number of artistes and rasikas looking for alternate professional and recreational avenues which offer glittering, glamorous, though evanescent, excitement particularly to large segments of vibrant youth. **Prestigious bodies which have a record of promoting Classical Carnatic music have an obligation to arrest adverse trends.**

Music colleges and institutions are situated mostly in cities amidst din and dust, noise and pollution, tension and counter-pulls. *Manodharmic* classical music needs places enjoying peace, calm and satisfying environment which instils individual dedication, whip up enthusiasm and promote uninhibited study, training and practice. Clocks in urban areas seem to click in *durita kāla* as if they have no faith even in *madhya kāla,* leave alone the *chowka kāla.* On the other hand, the ever-inquisitive eyes of many a teacher and disciple would seem to find fault with their slow movements! And there are *bona fide,* inherent problems of transport, appointments to keep and other factors which cannot be ignored. In a particular district, it was the practice to go on studying some certificate or diploma course at random till the boy got a job or the girl got married! Many take to music too so! How many of the students who went out of music colleges and universities now continue to practise music as a professional or as an amateur or have flowered into great performers? This should be a pointer to the genuineness and efficacy of studentship. A random census should help remedial steps.

Simultaneously result-oriented action to reactivate the lost or drying-up musical springs in rural parts is vital. Cities can provide the market for consumption but

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cannot produce! Seeds and seedlings have to draw on the gifts of nature such as those highlighted by Appar Swamigal viz., the exhilarating southerly breeze, flush of autumn bloom, lotus-studded ponds and humming of bees. *Visranti is sine quo non* for practice. (There was once a brave effort to meet shortage of vegetables by popularising kitchen gardens in towns. How far it was successful came to the fore when the scheme was allowed to die silently! Has that any significance to this sphere of art?) Music colleges and faculties should move to rural or at least semi-urban centres if the interests of music are of prime concern.

Students and apprentices should be advised to attend as many concerts as possible and present notes and there could be credit marks for such exercise.

It is complained that Corporate help is selective and patronising. Considerations other than the promotion of the art ill-suit Corporate norms and would not legitimise the outflow of funds.

Temples were the fulcra, nerve-centres and bastions of arts all along and the pride of Bharat. Their massive structures, effulgent architecture, immaculately chiselled sculpture, multi-dimensional festivals and services enjoyed an all-embracing primacy in the promotion of not only the religious and spiritual, but the economic, social and the cultural in the sanguine lives of the public. Our ancients took pride in raising magniloquent temples and with foresight provided for their upkeep. But misconceived policies and populist measures have deprived the temples of the means of maintenance and renovation. While governments are not averse to avail of their tourist opportunities and attractions, they are not helpful in reassuring their future. Their revival and renaissance are vital to the growth of art and music in the far-flung rural parts. **Corporate help to encourage the promotion of music at rural temples should be helpful and forthcoming.**

A committee of scholars and musicians could go into the alleged failure of music colleges and universities to present artistes of eminence worthy of their role and suggest ways and means of promoting their efficiency. In fact there have been frequent suggestions to increase the duration of University courses in music and also revise the syllabus and make available courses in music in all girls schools.

*****

Part I of this *Fragrant Garland* deals with special themes of interest. 'Tyagaraja, Saint or Poet' highlights issues which normally are subordinated in the genuine desire to laud his sainthood relegating to the background his himalayan stature as a poet of lavish parts, deep penetration, immaculate conception and facile presentation. *Sri Tyagaraja Aṣṭottara Sata Nāmāvali* is presented for the information of the public and to recall the services of Bangalore Nagaratnammal. 'Travails and Tribulations of an Artiste' is the cry of

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upcoming artistes vis-a-vis audience participation. 'Voice of Melody cries' is a symbolic (investigative type of) appeal. Mahakavi comes up for an analysis and there are other features. Part II-A deals with one of the *Sisya paramparas* of Tyagaraja, viz., the Wallajahpet. (This was actually conceived when R.K. Srikantan was honoured with the prestigious title of Sangita Kalanidhi which incidentally brought to focus the spread of Carnatic music in Karnataka and the great role once played by Mysore.) Part II-B outlines the ebullient lives of the **Pancharatnas of Tamil compositions** whose primacy in the field is unchallenged still. Part II-C deals with Avvaiyar, Serai Arivanar, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Narayana Tirtha, the Tillaisthanam maestros, the Marudanallur Bhagavata Mahapurusa, Sir C.V. Raman and many other masters and stalwarts besides performing artistes. Part II-D is but a continuation of Part II-C highlighting juicy biographical anecdotes, etc. on composers and musicians.

Part III-A makes a brief and cursory peep into the realm of Hindustani musicians just to highlight the fact that the two prime styles of music in India have but a common origin. The other parts continue the mode of presentation adopted in the earlier volumes which has found favour with all.

******

The *Garlands* are but a labour of love, a dedication to the art and a tribute to the savants of that art.

There is no element of profit. The book is unaided.

The earlier volumes - *A Garland, Another Garland and Yet Another Garland* - are before the music-loving public. I am assured by learned authorities that these are treasure-houses of information, valuable books of reference and source-books for teachers, students, researchers and lovers of music, art, culture, biography and history. I am assured that these volumes are worthy of adorning the elegant shelves at wisdom-packed studies and libraries of institutions and homes. Now in the light and spirit of the pregnant remarks of the great Sarngadeva, I submit

> **'I have dedicated my humble life to the publication of the *Garland* series to propagate the fragrant lives of composers, musicians, etc. to carve out a niche for myself in the pure hearts of the wise and the learned and in pursuit of my own fulfilment'.**

I am happy to present with hope and humility this fourth volume titled,

The Fragrant Garland.

December 1996

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt a gratitude to —

i. the vast galaxies and successive waves of composers, musicians, musicologists, hymnodists, etc. who have carried on the arduous task of not only sustaining the euphoria but of embellishing the immense, sacred science and art of Classical Carnatic music with dedication, devotion, dignity and distinction;

ii. the great institutions like the Music Academy, Madras, the Kalakshetra, Madras and Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar Library, Madras for enabling me to have access to their libraries which are storehouses of past intellectual legacy;

iii. newspapers like the *Hindu, Indian Express,* etc. and magazines like *Sruti, Shanmukha, Sangeetham,* etc.;

iv. Sarvasri T.S. Parthasarathy, a repository of musical wisdom, B.V.K. Sastry, the accredited columnist and musicologist and the musical devotee and author Raghusutha of Bangalore for their invaluable help, solicitude and encouragement;

v. Sri. H.K. Narasimhaswami, the genial and cultured Superintending Epigraphist (Retired), Archaeological Survey of India, who has been an exemplary source of immense help and well-meant advice, the good-natured Sri. T. Narasimhan, Deputy Collector (Retired) who was ever ready to lend his services, Sri. T.V. Srinivasan, IAS (Rtd.), a long-time friend and Dr. Uma Roy, USA.;

vi Sri. S. Rajam, the genial musician-artist of international repute for his magnanimous, inspiring support always with a musical smile and Veenai Sesha Ayyar, the eminent vainika and composer, for permitting his invocation song to be availed of in this book; and

vii. Sri. K.S. Venkataraman, poet, astrologer and owner of M/s. Chengacherial Printers, Chennai-600092 for getting the printing done competently.

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

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This pioneering work

'THE FRAGRANT GARLAND'

(Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers and Musicians—Book IV)

is
DEDICATED
to

my loving mother, Lakshmi alias Chellammal
my saintly father, Naganatha Sastrigal,

my Gurus

Sri Papanasam Sivan
Sri Subbarama Bhagavatar
Sri P.R. Sundar Rajan

and

my Patron Deities

Sri Parvatavardhini—*samēta*
Sri Rāmanāthaswāmi of Rāmeswaram,
Sri Pūrna Pushkalāmbikā *samēta*
Sri Hari—Hara—Putraswāmi, Mandhai and
Sri Alarmēlumangāl *samēta*
Sri Venkatēswaraswāmi, Tirupati.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Sri Krishna Bhajana Mandiram of Mandhai Sa. Krishnier. Bhajans on all auspicious days and pucca concerts of eminent artistes featured its activities. This picture, six decades old, shows a galaxy of musicians.

2. Sri Tyagaraja, the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru (By S. Rajam)

3. Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar, the Bard of Tiruvarur (By S. Rajam)

4. Syama Sastri, Talaprastara (By S. Rajam)

5. Sri. Gopalakrishna Bharati, the Revolutionary Poet of Tamil Renaissance (By S. Rajam)

6. Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal releasing *A Garland* in the presence of Sri Vijayendra
7. Saraswati Swamigal. Sri Haridas Giri Swamigal, the Bhagavatottama received the first copy.

8. Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar and Prof T.N. Krishnan — Both honoured with the title of **Sangita Kalasagara**. CMANA crossed the oceans to confer the title!

9. Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar *Ārādhana* at Ettayapuram - Bombay Sisters and other
10. devotees offer melodious homage. (The author too was permitted to sing!)

11. The samadhi of Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Much has been done and much remains to be done! The memorial to national Poet Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati is nearby.

12. *Nādōpāsakās* are honoured. Well, why not *nāda sēvakās* too? R. Srinivasan who had done solid service to music is conferred with the title of Nāda Sēvakā by Sangita Kalanidhi T.N. Krishnan & Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam (Author is present too.)

13. *'Nādalōluḍai* is *bṛhmānanda* and not *sanmānalōluḍai'*, said the good vocalist Voleti Venkateswarulu. He is giving concert with G.J.R. Krishnan & Karaikudi Mani.

14. Panju Bhagavatar of Tillaisthanam *Parampara* - eminent devotee of Sri Tyagaraja.

15. Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan - Vide 'The Cauvery flows westwards' in Part II A.6.

16. Sri Sarabhamurti - Deity at Tirubhuvanam - Why *Sarabhanandana tala* was named after the deity? - Vide Part I - IV.

17. Sir C.V. Raman, Nobel Laureate who did much in Sound and Light and who inaugurated the Festival of Music Academy.

18. The cheque received from a cultured lady of USA for the project. It was accepted but not its contents. She serves music so much. Why supplement it with a donation too?

19. Sri T.T. Vasu released the book Yet Another Garland: Dr. T.K. Murti received the
20. first copy; T.S. Parthasarathy introduced the book. - Courtesy: *Dinamalar*

21. Organised medley around soulful melody at a marriage: Cartoonist Keshav sparkles in his riotous configuration. - Courtesy The *'Hindu'*

22. *Melakarta Chakra* (Katapayadi Formula)

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Nādabṛhmam

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal pointed out that when *Nādabṛhmam* comes out from the right source, it easily attracts the masses and rasikas who get dissolved in the *Bṛhman*. Hearing a musical note in its own discipline is also suggested for *Bṛhmānubhava*. That is why *Védic* rituals provide for vocal and instrumental music which is equated to recitation of *Védic mantras*.

— Agnihotram Ramanuja Thathachariar

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PART I

Disciplining of Emotion

'We can no more resist the thrill of music than the birds can stop singing. It is part of life itself. It is in the highest expression of art that the highest joy is found, not in the unrestrained expression of emotion but in the disciplining of emotion. Music is rather an attempt to control and to express in an artistic form.'

— Sir C.V. Raman at the Music Academy, Madras (1933)

* * * * *

Madras, the Wimbledon of Music!

'Not till we could make a name at Chennai (Madras) did we get any recognition from Karnataka audiences! It is the recognition gained at Chennai that made us popular in Karnataka too.'

— Violinist Mysore Manjunath to S.V.K.

* * * * *

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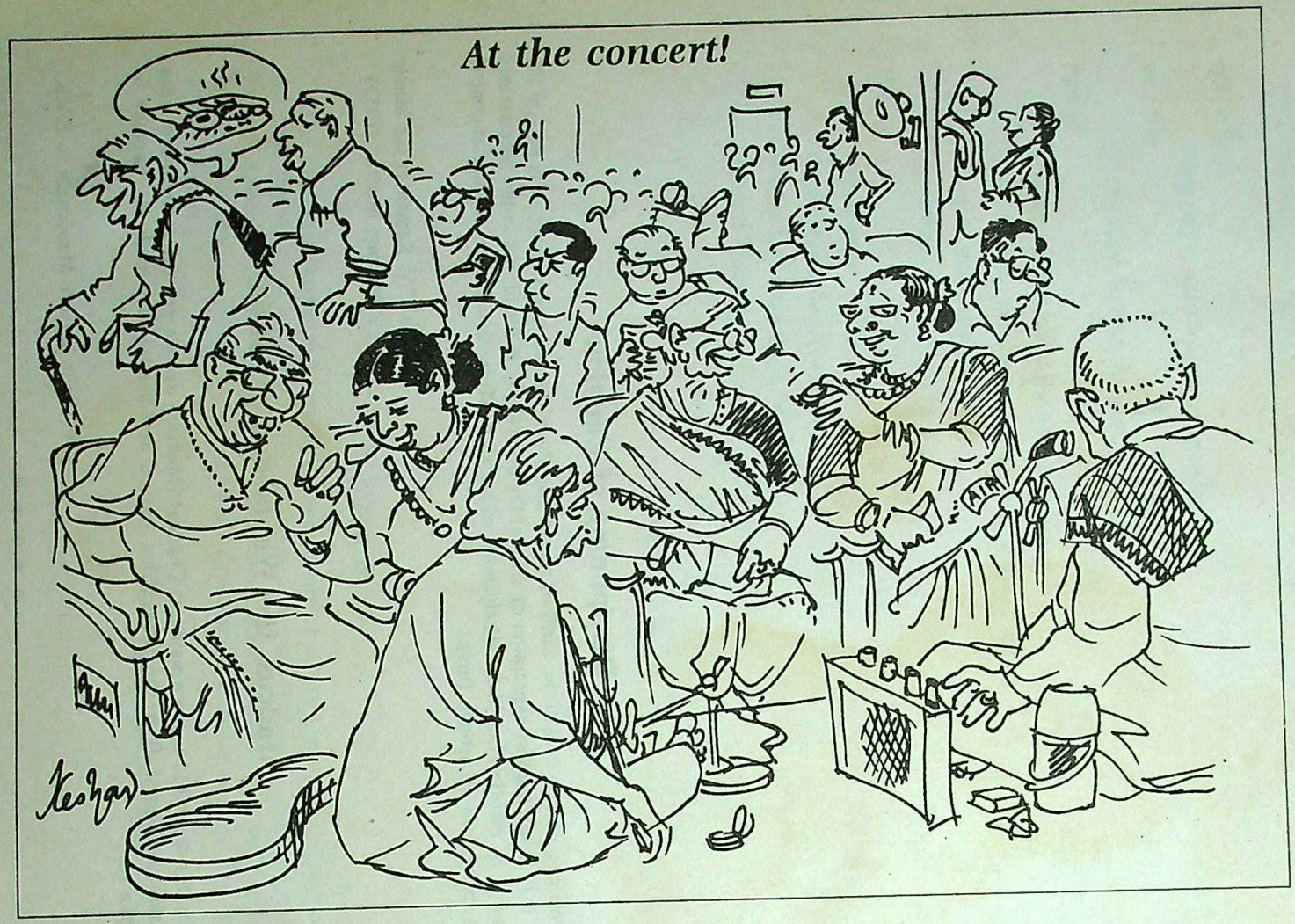

Organised medley around soulful melody at a marriage: Cartoonist Keshav sparkles in his riotous configuration.

- Courtesy The *'Hindu'*

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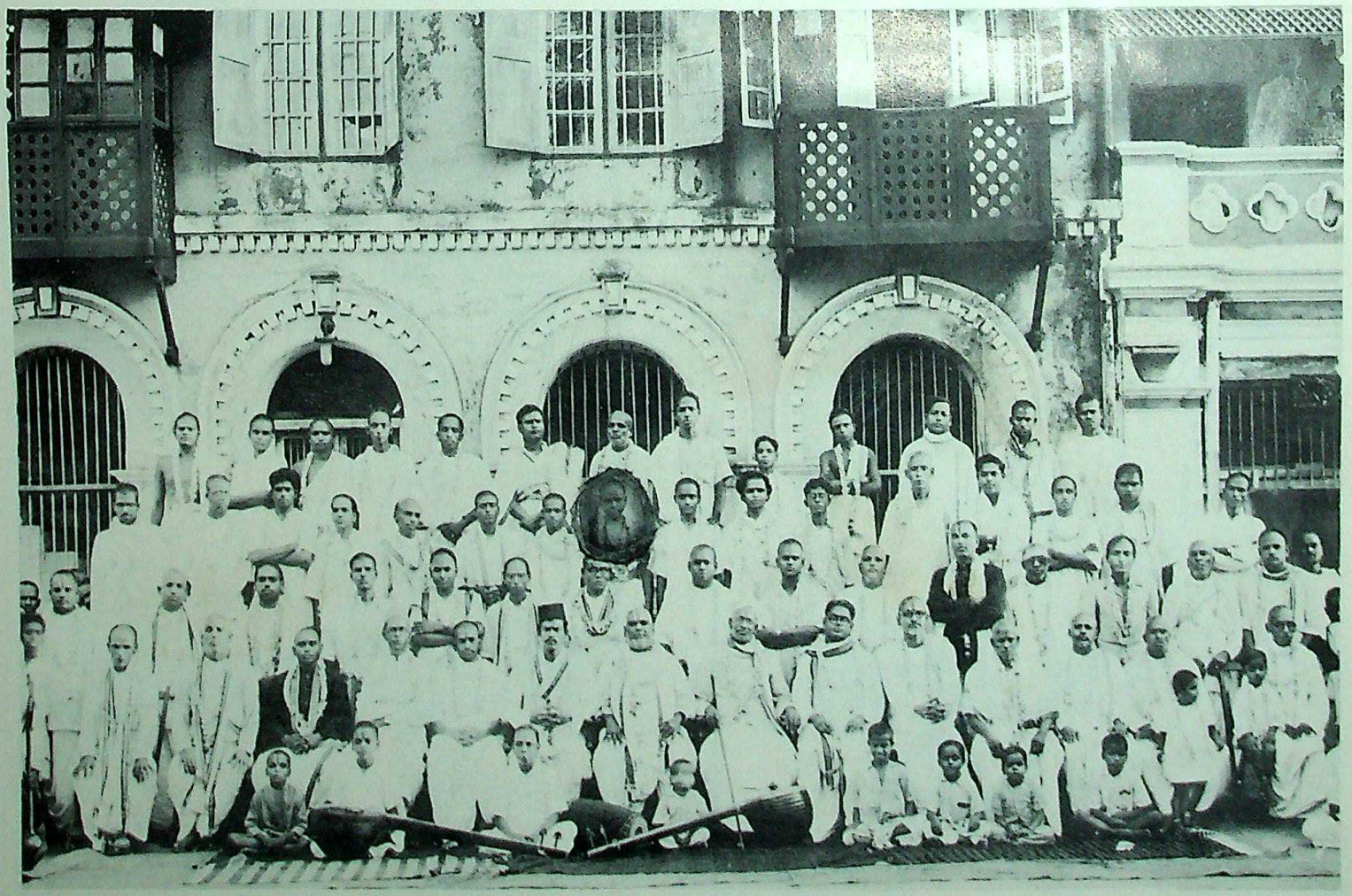

KRISHNA BHAJANA MANDIRAM ANNUAL FUNCTION 1932-33

Mandhai S. Krishna Ayyar with a galaxy of musicians like Tiger, Mudicondan, Papanasam Sivan, Madurai Mani, Gopu, Rajagopala Sarma, Ganesier, Palghat Ramachandran, Parur Sundaram Ayyar and several others.

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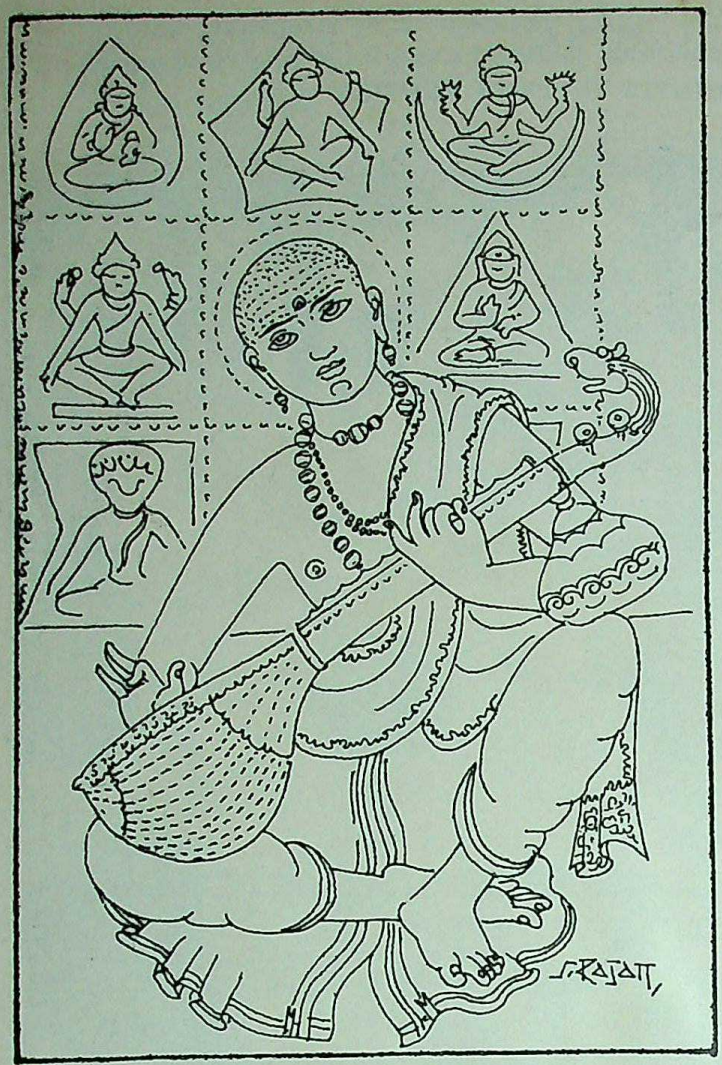
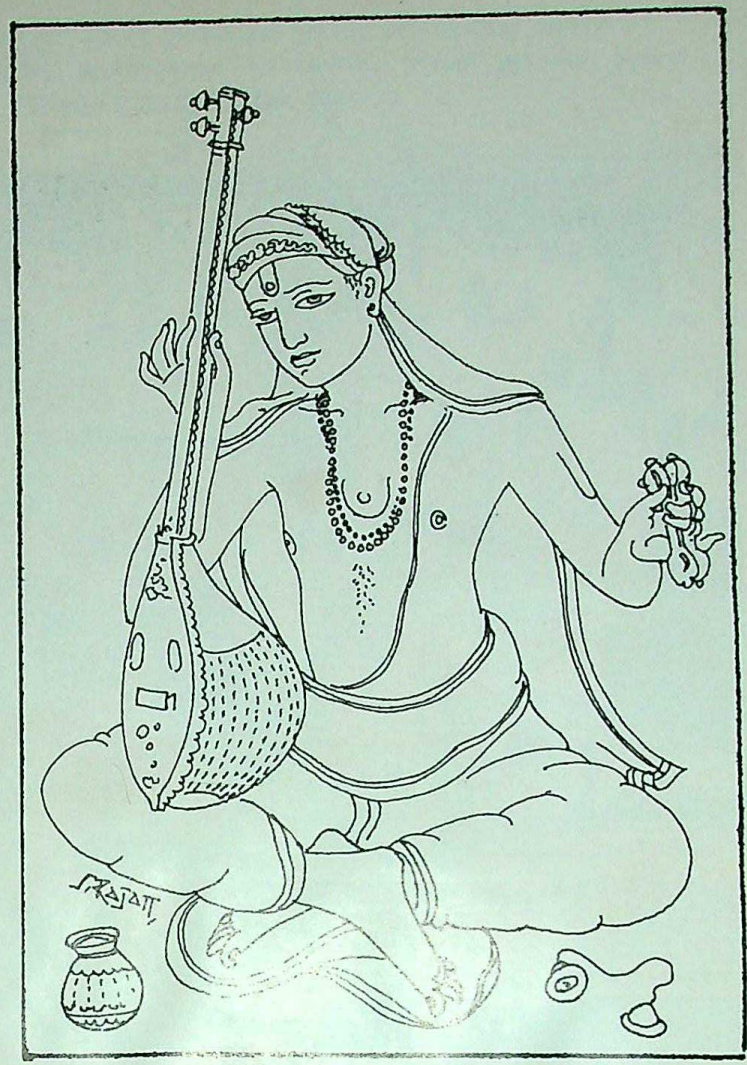


SRI MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

Architect of Raga Forms
(By S. Rajam, Musician-Artist)



SRI TYAGARAJA

Fragrant Gold
(By S. Rajam, Musician-Artist)

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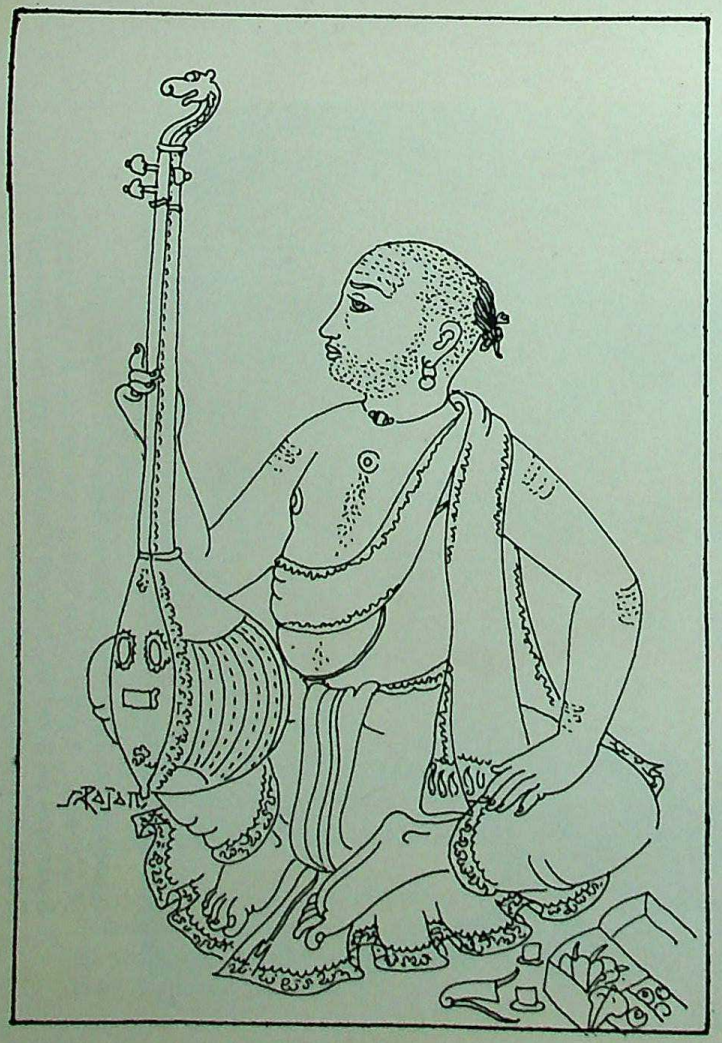
(By S. Rajam, Musician-Artist)



TALAPRASTARA SYAMA SASTRI
(By S. Rajam, Musician-Artist)

Sri Gopalakrishna Bharati

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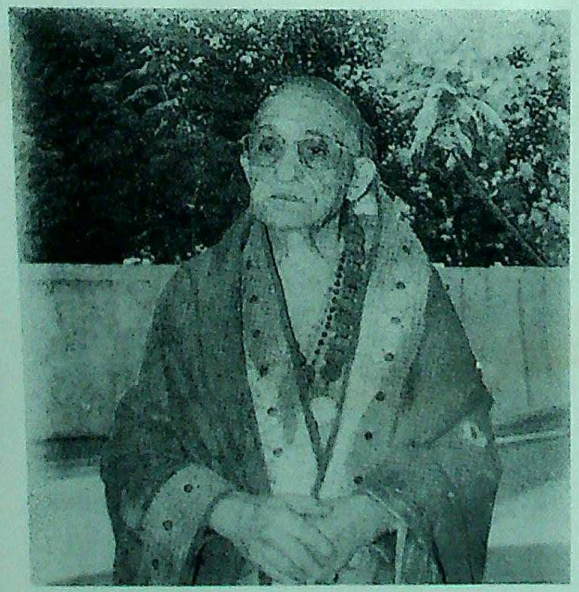
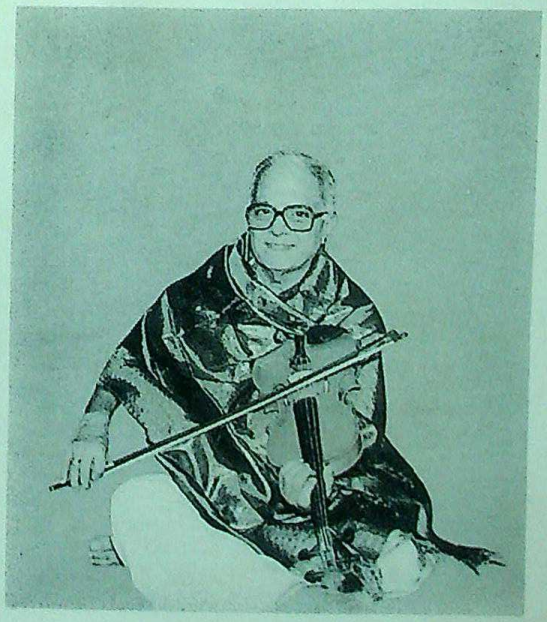
The author is speaking at the function releasing *A Garland.*

Jagatguru Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal releasing *'A Garland '*, the first copy being received by Sri Haridos Giri Swamigal on June 19, 1990 at Kanchipuram. Sri Vijayendra Sarawati Swamigal is all smiles.

SANGITA KALASAGARAS



'Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakespeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than' Semmangudi is the first of Sangeetha Vidwans.



"What moves you and touches your heart is *Suswaram;* and Krishnan is an embodiment of *Suswaram.* When he touches the *shadja*, it is ambrosial *Suswaram.*"

- C.V. Narasimhan.

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Sri MUTHUSWAMY DIKSHITAR *ĀRĀDHANA*

at Ettayapuram in 1996

Bombay Sisters and devotees singing the soulful songs of Dikshitar.

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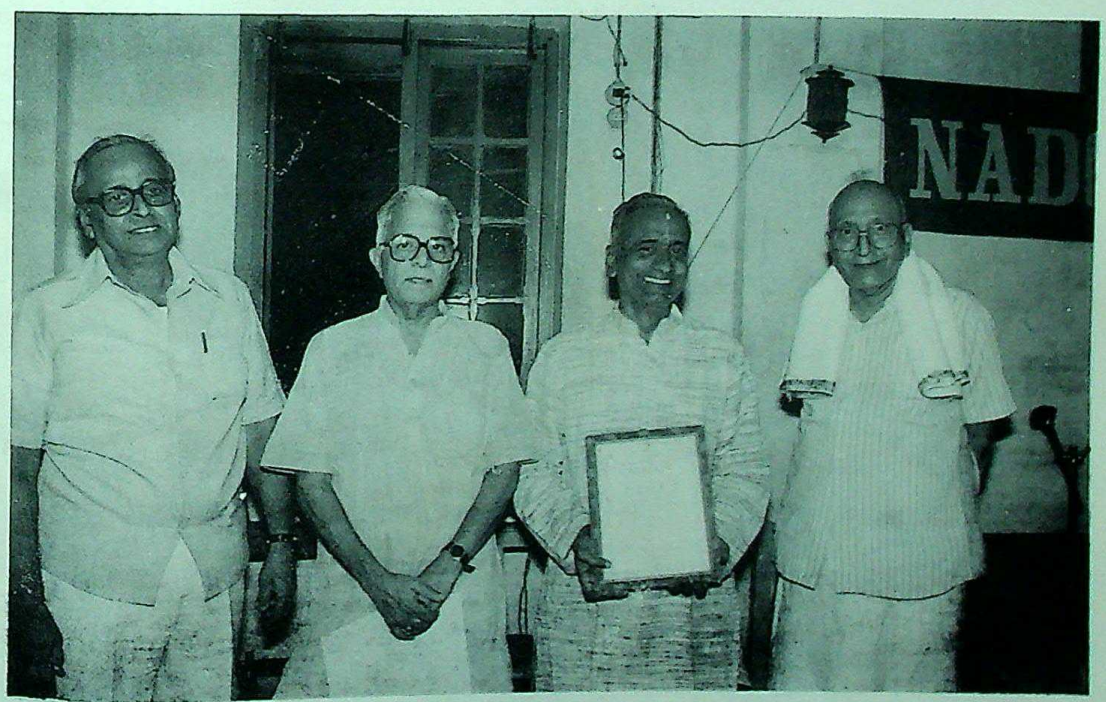
THE SAMADHI OF SRI MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR at ETTAYAPURAM

(Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati hailed from here.)



NĀDOPĀSANA SRINIVASAN TAKES THE TITLE 'NĀDA SĒVAKA'

(If *Nādopāsakās* could be honoured, should not a *Nāda Sēvaka?* Author arranged it.)

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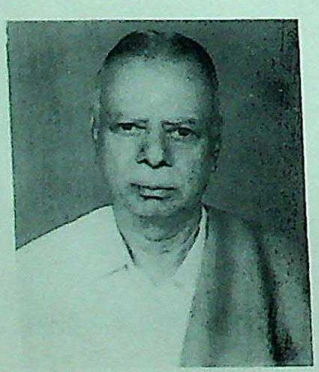
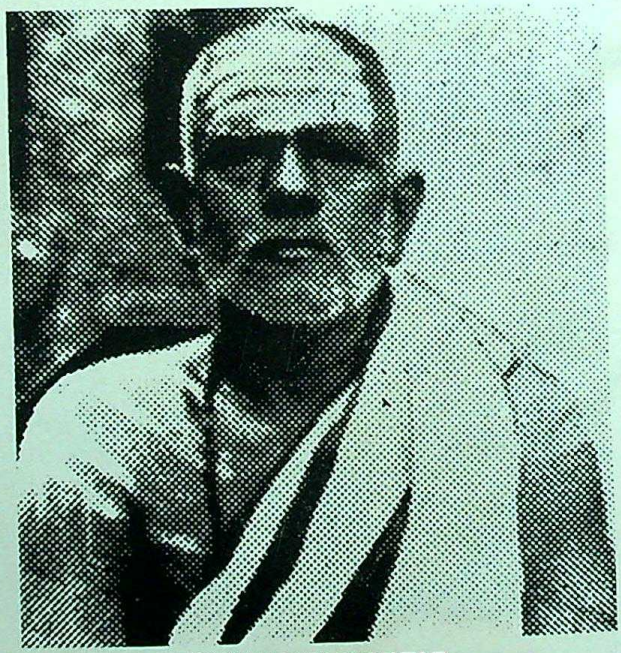
'Nādalōluḍai is *Bṛhmānanda;* and not *Sanmānaloluḍai'*

Voleti Venkateswarulu (1928-1989) giving a concert with G.J.R. Krishnan of Lalgudi and Karaikudi Mani, mridangam maestro.



R.K. SRIKANTAN
(Sangita Kalanidhi)



PANJU BHAGAVATAR
(The eminent disciple of Tillaisthanam Rama Ayyangar)

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I

TYAGARAJA, SAINT OR POET?

A

Prologue

'A wide interminable forest, impenetrable wilderness. It is dark midnight. Bird and beast are utterly and motionlessly still...inconceivable in that noiseless stillness, there was a sound:

'Shall the desire of my heart ever be fulfilled ?'
That sound came again and again!
Three times the wide sea of darkness was thus shaken.

Then the answer came:
'What is the stake put down?'

The first voice replied:
'I have staked my life and all its riches.'

The echo answered,
'Life! It is a small thing which all can sacrifice!'

'What else is there? What more can I give?'
This was the answer, 'Thy Soul's worship'.

— **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**
in *Ananda Math:* Translation by
Sri Aurobindo.

'The soul of man is the stage for triumph and defeat, suffering and joy. It is the point of intersection between the divine and the human. Each human being has his roots here below though he is also a reflection of the celestial light. The demand for self-realisation is an appeal from the creature to the Creator in us', said Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Bharat has had the rare privilege and immense pride of presenting an unimaginable and interminable galaxy of matchless gems of saints, seers, *bhāgavatās, vāggēyakāras,* patriots, etc., who fully and absolutely subscribed and dedicated themselves to "Soul's worship" (the worship of *Paramātman*). The Classical Carnatic Trinity were in that illustrious galaxy. We deal here with the foremost among them, Sri Tyagaraja Swamigal, the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru.

B

Tyagaraja has made remarkable, singular and significant contribution to the soul, content and substance of Carnatic music that has few parallels in the annals of music. His prolific, all-embracing compositions have survived political turmoils and

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social upheavals of more than a century and a half and still hold primacy, and more often monopoly, at festivals, concerts, domestic functions and other celebrations. Not only India, but distant America, Europe and Australia and even the Middle-East vie with one another in popularising the enthralling songs of the bard.

The unique and wide currency and popularity of the songs of Tyagaraja are attributable to many favourable causes such as—

the initial support and spurt provided by a well-knit band of dedicated disciples and perennial disciple-lines;

the initial support and sustenance given by local royalty to telugu in which the bard has composed most;

the rare *lalitam, sukham* and *soukhyam* of the lucid *sahitya* and soulful *sangita;*

the poetic and spiritual eminence of Tyagaraja and his code of conduct with faithful and rigid adherence to it in life;

the personal life of a model *grihasta* true to the canons of Hinduism as expounded in *srutis* and *smṛtis* and succinctly condensed by the poet in his *Nidhi Chala Sukhama* and other songs which appealed to disciples, musicians and the public, since Hinduism and Bharat always venerated men of renunciation; and he was a Prince of Renunciation (Tyāgarāja) in name and spirit; and

the great *vāggēyakāra* was very near Thanjavur, the Cultural Capital of the South. The ship of his spiritual-poetic life sailed on calm waters of the Cauvery and its branches barring a stray visit upto Tirupati which too added to his dignity as well as to the content, merit and majesty of his songs.

Barring minor domestic episodes of little impact on his way of life, he lived in the world of Rama Consciousness — *Rāma Bhakti Sāmrājya.*

C

Life:

What was his life like? Nothing could reveal the picture or describe it better than by borrowing from the fragrant songs of pristine glory of Adi Aḻwars (Apostles of Viṣnu):

'With earth as lamp, ocean as ghee, sun as flame, he made garlands of songs to decorate the feet of the Lord.'

— Poygai Āḻwar (as slightly modified.)

'With love as lamp, spiritual ardour as ghee, sublime thoughts as wick, friendship melting, I, who am clear in wisdom-based spiritual lore and *sangītam,* lighted the Lamp of Spiritual and Devotional Music.'

— Bhūta Āḻwar (as slightly modified.)

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'Tirukkaṇḍēn, ponmēni kaṇḍēn, tigaḷum arukkaṇṇan niramum kaṇḍēn...)

— Pēy Aḷwar

It would appear as if the Ādi Āḷwars, 'who had delved deep into divinity and whose hymns are the outpourings of God-intoxicated mystics to whom God was an intimate friend and guide' (TSP), sang as above in the seventh and eighth centuries to be applied to Tyagaraja too a millennium later. As K.S. Venkatraman of Kudandai observes, Tyagaraja presented his melodic, fragrant garlands of songs with spiritual Bharat as garden, *Vedas, Purānas, Upaniṣads* and other spiritual lore and his own intellectual prowess as flowers, *Rama-bhakti* as thread and Rama-consciousness monopolising his thought, speech and action. It has been said, 'There is a vital link between what a man does consciously and deliberately and his personality. Art itself is a way of life. By way of life, we mean a habit conducive to man's good and in particular to the attainment of man's last and present end of happiness.' (Ananda Coomaraswamy). Tyagaraja is a classic example of this.

D

The prime theme of Tyagaraja in his songs is *bhakti,* passion of *Jīvātma* to merge and realise its identity in the *Paramātma,* anxiety to discard this farcical human life and to achieve the goal of salvation. In this endeavour the poet has practically exhausted the vast vistas of *bhāvas* and *rasas.* In fact, he is seen as an *Ocean of Bhāva-Rasa (Bhāva-rasa kaḍal).* Balancing his emotions, prayers and appeals, he would *"seem"* to have often been apparently haunted by apprehensions, doubts, fears of deficiencies in *bhakti* which might retard his march towards salvation and restrain his ambition to

reach the *sannidhi* (constant company) of his *Ishta Devata,* Sri Rama,
enjoy perpetual *darśan,*
sing *kīrtana* in praise of Him,
hear His glory and exploits (*śravana*),
have talks with Him *(sambhāṣana)* and
serve Him (*sēvana - dāsya).*

Delay and lapse of time in attaining the goal of his passionate aspirations leading to interminable anxiety and his total lack of interest in anything but the divine would **'seem'** to drive him to despair, frustration and anger, dejection and despondency, self-deprecation and self-pity. He assumes the role of a *nayika* and pours forth diverse emotions not on any earthly worthy but on his fond hero, Rama. He virtually assumes himself or seems to pass through the projected agonising character roles of—

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a *sviya*, the lawfully married wife,
a *proudha*, an adept in love-making,
a *swādīnapatika*, who is aware of the dedication of her husband,
a *virahōtkanthitā*, nervously awaiting her Lord,
a *kalahatarita*, repenting after quarreling and sending him away,
a *samyōga*, one who is with her lover and
a *viyōga*, one who is alone and longs for him in different phases as revealed in his songs.

'The name Tyagaraja means the Prince of Renunciation, of those who give up worldly desires. In his case, renunciation is the result of undistracted devotion to *God—anurāgāt virāgah...* **The soul passes through moods of self-pity, anger, distraction, devotion.** In the unregenerate condition, **it feels estranged from itself,** from others, from the creative ground of all being. Tyagaraja describes the moods with great delicacy of feeling.'

— Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in the *Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja.*

Inability to contain and control creeping anxieties and fears is born out of his singular and passionate devotion *sans* blemish, which he takes care to place unequivocally on record often. The pathos grows intense when he compares his own case with others ostensibly less than his peer, who had the grace of the Lord quickly and more easily! The foremost saint-poet feels ignored and let down! The spirit of *khandita nayika* revolts - *"ennilum avaḷ umak kētravaḷō?"* - (How is she better than me? I am doing all penance; I am singular in my devotion and dedication; I am sacrificing all for You. And yet, you favour her and procrastinate in my case!) The poet marshals with remarkable felicity his immense poetic genius, brings to play myriad angles of portrayal of the *bhavas* in elegant diction, lucid style, chaste prosody, lilting music and poetic ingenuity with unexcelled privilege and mastery.

In presenting all these, Tyagaraja conforms to the highest norms of *lakshana* and *lakshya* of music in keeping with his high image as a supreme *vāggēyakāra* and unsullied bhakta. **One could see apparent conflict of interest, approach and action - the *inter se* incompatibility between Tyagaraja, the absolute saint and Tyagaraja, the supreme *vāggēyakāra*. Do the two aspects run on never-converging parallel lines or do they converge and gallop on the *'raja marga'* he carves out for himself?**

E

'Giants have lavished praises on You;
Nothing is left wanting, perhaps!
What, if I do not praise You?'

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The ugly sign of frustration, indeed! Excruciating distress creeps over him at being let down. After all, he is not a man of the world. *"Niṣkāma Tyāgarāja"* (free from desires and attachment), he avers in *Kaṭṭu jēsināvu Rāma bandu (Atana)*. He craves not for wealth or worldly joy - *Bhōga dhana sampattulaku jēyi jācanu nā* in *Vāridhi nīku (Todi).* His is a life of *bhajan* and *uncchavṛtti* (alms). Master of scriptures and *sangita,* he has been a scrupulous saintly soul with single-minded devotion to Rama; and Rama, of all gods, is credited with serene graciousness! 'Is He not the Great One who saves those who do daily bhajan, tambura in hand with perfect swara and spotless mind in strict conformity with prescribed formulae and *sampradaya?' - Kaddanu vāriki (Todi).* When Graciousness does not respond to one who is so devoted and dedicated, it generates the pathetic plea:

> 'How is it that Thy Grace has not yet been bestowed on me?'
> - *Innāḷḷu dayarākunna vainamēmi (Nārāyaṇagauḷa)*

Such pathetic pleas find expression in numerous kritis.

> *'Nē pogaḍakuṇṭē nīkēmi kodavō' (Desika Todi)* is the song in self-deprecation in which his frustration and obvious and apparent loss of faith rush to the fore when he states in jealous vexation:
>
> "What is lost if I do not add to Your fame with praises when eminent bhaktas like Śukha, Śaunaka, Prahlada, Narada, Parameśa and others perform *archanas* to You?"

The *virahōtkānthita* or *vipralabhda* or even *viyoga nayika bhava* dazzles. Charming interludes add titillating spice.

Again,

> 'Rama! When I represent my woes and appeal to You for Thy Grace, why should You "pounce on me like puffed rice from the frying pan?"' — *Ramā Ramaṇa bhāramā (Vasantabhairavi).*

He is ostensibly in terrific rage like a wounded cobra or tiger! The biting sarcasm is deliberate with intent to remonstrate forcefully against the monstrous neglect of the most qualified, eligible soul. (Poor poet, there is no *writ* of *mandamus* against God; he could only place the protest on record for Him to take notice of or ignore it!) Quick follows another salvo:

'Do my pleadings tire You?' — *Nē moṛabeṭṭitē (Rupavati)*

'All is not well with Him', so runs the painful thought as could be gleaned from:

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'I have been ardently praising You all along
and adoring You! Yet You choose to bargain!'

— *Koniyādē nāyeda (Kōkiladhwani)*

'Bargain?' Could there be a price even for benediction? Strange, quips the *proudha nayika* in Tyagaraja. The charming coquettish advances are all aptly and succinctly presented with prosodic elegance.

'Well-versed in *Vedas* and *Sastras* treading the right path' (*Atukārādani balka* in *Manoranjani*) and having been 'brought up in *Vedic* and *sastraic* traditions (*Evarimāta in Khamboji*), he feels it his mission and privilege to lay down norms and code of conduct as in

Karuna ēlāganṭē — *Varali*
Atade dhanyudu — *Kapi*

It is known that Tyagaraja not only had mastered *lakshanas* of music but had gone through *Natya Sastra,* seen puppet shows and probably many dances and dramas which abounded in Thanjavur, Tiruvaiyaru belt in temples and outside. As *vāggēyakāra par excellence,* the dramatic shifts, thrusts and dynamic turns and changes and all that goes as stage techniques, and again the presentation of emotive expressions in myriad styles by dancers, all these are innate, inherent, natural traits of Tyagaraja and he is no stranger to any of these as his operas would vouch for. Here again, he is at it. **Once a poet, always a poet!** He could be seen doing the *nattuvāngam* exquisitely when kritis are arranged to present a dance-drama. In fact, V.P. Dhananjayan and his Bharata Kalanjali brought out in December 1995 at the Music Academy, Madras a ballet christened *'Tyagaraja Vaibhavam'* by drawing on the songs of the bard to give an element of continuity since each song was for individual rendition and not for a ballet like *Nauka Caritram.*

F

Would it take Tyagaraja long to probe and see through the vexatious, annoying conduct of Rama? (The *nayika* spirit is fundamentally one of a throbbing detective, ever agile, alert, sensitive, inquisitive, inductive and impressionable.) It is not long for the *nayika* to get at the *raison d'etre.* Presumably the *nayika* cries out in soliloquy:

'Eureka, now I see through your utter neglect of my pleas and praises. Not only have they evoked no response but have been met with undeserved contempt, despise and disregard....'

This process of thought bursts out in *Daridāpu Ṭeka vēdiṭē (Saveri):*

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'Without refuge elsewhere, if one seeks Thy favour, it would appear Thy sympathy would not be forthcoming!'

The deep thrust comes in the *anupallavi*:

'Perhaps You would condescend to think of saving me only if I have elephants and wealth!'

Nepotism or wealth-based favouritism? (Had Tyagaraja premonition of what was to come about in 1917 in Russia and later elsewhere?) He cites a positive case in support:

'You had saved even the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, the inveterate enemy of the Devas!'

The bullish prosecuting instinct in Tyagaraja is in full gear, garners motives and builds up a plausible case citing a precedent. He proceeds to build it up sedulously with uncanny prosecuting fervour —

'You have no love for the poor and the holy.
You have no sense of shame!'

— *Nī dasanudāsuda (Hamirkalyani)*

पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
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'You prevaricate ...' — *Aṭla balukudu (Atana)*

'Have You no self-respect or sense of shame?' — *Mānamu lēdā (Hamirkalyani)*

'If I aver "surrender" once, does it not suffice?
Why all this miserly attitude? What is Your gain?'

— *Rāma Daivamā (Surati)*

R
380.92
RAJ - F

'Is it false friendship ; or
are You vexed at my very sight?'

— *Rāmachandra Nīdaya (Surati)*

The thrust, scope and kind of caustic attack enlarge and converge from different angles and sharp biting terms flow out as it does from a tongue-in-check political dissident. Or has he turned an atheist? (Now enters the *sakhi*.)

'Dear, you part with your heart believing in Him! But
He is hard-hearted. No symptom of sympathy is seen!'

— *Vanajanayanuḍa (Kedaragaula)*

It would appear that he requisitions a *sakhi* here to end the monotony of monologue and she seeks to console and comfort the *nayika*. But is she not insidiously adding fuel to fire! Here the soliloquy changes into conversation - let us presume it so - finding a sympathetic chord in the *sakhi* who ignites while professing to console!

'None roams about unashamed like me... My life has become an object of ridicule.'

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Is it *sotto voce* or a reply unburdening her sorrow to *sakhi?* Conflict of feelings are presented for *abhinaya* or effects! Suddenly, the mood changes. He makes her to retract.

— *Siggumāli nā vale dhara (Kedaragaula)*

Parts of such kritis could easily be woven together into an opera. Nobody knows when, in what chronological order and under what circumstances, Tyagaraja composed most of his songs. There is intense *nayika bhava,* the *jivatma* crying to join the Ultimate, the bunded, blocked river trying to breach and join its destination, the ocean, the hapless child crying hoarse to reach the warm bosom of its mother, the forlorn lover separated by fate longing passionately for the secure arms of the beloved, the tendril as if with *adwaitic* ardour trying to reach the safe support of the plant nearby; the new-born calf crying credulously for the cow; and the young one of the kangaroo or monkey anxious to feel, experience and be close to the pulse of its mother! All such songs of Tyagaraja are pure, perfumed, soul-filling delights to the connoisseur or cognoscente. Tyagaraja slowly develops the case — delay, lack of response, fervent prayers and appeals without response; occurrence of thoughts of favouritism, nepotism in other cases leading to accusation, etc. On the point of break-down, he retracts as in *Siggumāli* – as is done by Uthukadu Venkatasubbier also in *Kaḷḷamē* Ariyāda (*Amṛtavarṣini).*

G

The questions that arise for answer are:

'Whether the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru was subject to vacillation in his *bhakti* for Rama as fervently alleged by most writers?

Was he a victim of changing moods, faith and frustration, trust and distrust, love and hatred?

Did he indulge **consciously** in tirades against his beloved *Ishta Devata?'*

The answer is a positive, **unequivocal 'No' and 'Never'.** He was not and was never a victim of moods or uncertainties. He was too learned and seasoned a saint-composer to be credited with vacillation, equivocal approach or lack of decision. In the absence of chronological sequence in composition, a certain element of firming up in approach and decision could have been marginally progressive but there is not much material to infer or confirm the same. The critical issue is whether he wilfully indulged **as a bhakta** - consciously in that role - in tirades against his beloved *Ishta Devata,* Rama. **The answer to this**

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too is a positive 'No'. To say that he was angry with Rama, that he was upset by the delay and that he gave vent to frustrated emotions consciously as a bhakta is to berate him and pull him down from the high pedestal he, by divine will, occupies. His songs abound with spiritual lore and truths and he himself was a 'realised' soul which he candidly indicates in his songs:

Tatva meruga tarama? (Garudadhwani):

> 'Is it possible to realise the truth that You, Rama, are the meaning of the *Upaniṣadic* declaration that "Thou art that "?

Cheḍe buddhi (Atana):

> 'Meditate on the Eternal Truth that Sri Vasudeva is everything.'

And in *Rama Sitarama* (*Balahamsa*), Tyagaraja affirms that in his *adwaitic* realisation, he would never leave the Lord for ages! And he categorically affirms that it is the essence of *Veda* and *Sastras.* Hence to say that he was vexed with the delay in attaining *mokṣa* is to mistake his poetic ecstasy, lyrical embroidery and jeweller's ornamentation for lack of knowledge of and faith in *Vedic* and *Upaniṣadic* truths. He could never indulge in worldly *tete-a-tete.*

His high stature, image and role could not countenance *pseudos* and he was not one. In fact, he has a harsh word for them all in—

Teliyaleru Rama, bhakti margamunu	***— Dhenuka***
Evaru teliya poyyeru	***— Punnagavarali***
Rama Rama Krisna Yanare	***— Gaulipantu***
Nalina lochana nivugaka	***— Madyamavati***
Kanugonu soukhyamu	***— Nayaki***
Entamuddo	***— Bindumalini***

It is not insurgency in heart that was full of Rama *bhakti* but vibrancy of his robust imagination and the stridency, speaking eloquency and grandeur of his composing mastery which enabled him to see, converse, cajole, accuse, tease and condemn his Rama. Did not Yasoda tie down her most beloved Krishna as significantly highlighted in *Yenna Tavam Śeidanai* by Papanasam Sivan?

I shall cite here an episode from the life of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal who ascended the Kanchi Sankara *Peetham* at the tender age of twelve. His two attendants would wake him up by 4 a.m., take him to the adjacent River Cauvery, make him take the prescribed ablutions in the chill flowing waters, force him to perform all the prescribed observances, study

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lessons and suffer all rigours and when they retire at noon for their own food, prostrate before boy-Jagatguru (Swamigal) and pray to be forgiven for having been rude to their own guru! This they did dutifully everyday! Swamiji has recorded that his later eminence was entirely due to those two dedicated attendants' uncompromising sense of duty, guided solely by their uninhibited ambition and unimpeachable passion to see their guru in the boy grow up to the fullest stature the august *Peetham* demanded! Their daily conduct was harsh but was born out of a singular will to do only the good and their heart pulsated with noble instincts. ***Mens rea* is the basic factor that decides guilt.**

> **'The faith of each is in accordance with his nature; O Bharata,**
> **Man consists of his faith; as a man's faith is, so is he.'**
>
> — *Bhagawad Gita* - XVII-3

Tyagaraja himself clarifies his position clearly in songs like:

Kaligi uṇṭē gadā (Kiravani)	:	'I found fault with You out of ignorance. Pray, be not angry with me.'
Aparādhamula nōrva (Rasali)	:	'Pray, bear with me for making appeals impelled by ignorance and suffering.'
Bhuvini dāsuḍanē (Sriranjani)	:	'Whatever manner You deal with me, Thy sacred feet shall be my refuge.'
		'Weal or woe, I have not yielded to grief. Thy holy feet shall be my only refuge.'

There is a positive, conscious assertion of finality. He was in no mood to allow his heart and mind to stray from the chartered '*raja marga*'. His soul was unruffled like the flame in a pot. **Strident songs flow out of the mind of the poet and not the heart of the saint!**

H

All the projected detours including *nindāstuti* planted in his songs - **consciously** done by him - are sheer poetic indulgences, romantic flights of a fanciful, resonant mind, intellectual exuberance and portrayal of the *nāyaka-nāyika, sakhi bhavas* of the dancing soul, *atma* or *brhman* encased in the *sthūla śarīra*—form of the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru. They are but deliberate, imaginary distortions and dramatic fancies vital to bring into full play poetic dexterity and kite-flying.

The poet in the *adwaitic* bhakta is imbued with a desire to play and enjoy full freedom of expression with *Parabṛhman,* free from the shackles and constraints of a *dwaita* (dualist) *bhakta,* with his serene stoic devotion as exemplified in *autsukhya* - the longing for *sannidhi, darśan,* etc. Absolute *bhakti*

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conscious of its integrity and strength declines to be bound down by the rules of conduct outlined for mundane man or mortal poet. After all, who is this Rama and who was the **realised** Tyagaraja? Are not they one and the same according to *adwaitic* tenets, as the Absolute and a peck of that Absolute taking human form at Tiruvarur and sojourning at Tiruvaiyaru with a mission to fulfil? The mother enjoys the antics of the child; the cow tolerates, bears with enjoyable bliss and eyes closed when its calf jams and squeezes the udder for the last or the non-existent drop of milk; one could see good musicians and *bhāgavatās* closing the eyes while on *alapana* or *bhajan.* Even so all the sneers, insults and sarcasm have a positive place and are necessary ingredients when the *bhakta* has to play the role of a *vāggēyakāra* too. The poet in Tyagaraja carves out and creates a world of his own - a sort of Triśanku *swarga* — gathering freedom to indulge in diverse *sanchāri-bhāvas* and revel, incidentally enriching not only *kriti* and *kirtans* but the entire gamut of music and musicology and literature, as will be seen from his taking 'classes' through songs (distant education) and disciples on every segment of the fine art. His *nāṭya-soaked* mind summons to its aid his vast erudition, mastery in *lakshana-lakshya* aspects of music and dance, his absolute hold over ancient lores, theatrical appeals, devices, manoeuvres and stunts. His innate rhetorical grandeur of conception and ever-green love of the best in *gita, nṛitta, natya,* etc force him to linger on as long as is possible in the *Bhava-Rasa Swarga* to present and portray as many forms and shapes of his poetic skills and talents as is possible, taking leave of his sober, tranquil ascetic mould overflowing with serene *bhakti,* to converse, soliloquize, argue, remonstrate, sing and dance. In this process, he summons Rama and other gods or rushes up to them. In all such free-lance excursions, he ensures keeping full focus on the central theme, mission and message of his life with inveterate fortitude throughout his impressionable life.

It should also be appreciated that apart from the needs and demands of a multi-faceted composer to exhibit mastery, this satisfies the 'human' urge and craving in him to give vent to occasional bitterness in life, taking to task his *Iṣta* Dēvata like a child kicking its mother. Papanasam Sivan, in his song *Enna Tavam Śeidanai,* seeks to elicit from Yasoda the 'nature of penance she had done to suckle, cradle, lullaby, chastise and play with the Creator of the fourteen worlds as a child in arms'. Like Yasoda, like some apostles and sages, Tyagaraja takes freedom to tease and condemn his God to quench and satisfy the ingenuous human flame in him. Did not Sundaramurty Nayanar send Him to his lovers? Did not Kannappa Nayanar seek to identify the eyes of the Lord

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with his legs? Did not Sabari serve Rama with pre-tasted jungle delicacies? As in law, intention and motive decide culpability.

Morning ablutions and poojas over, sitting on the pial of his house or the serene corridors of the ample temple of Sri Pranatārtihara or on the tranquil bank of the Cauvery, Tyagaraja was probably giving musical shapes to riotous visions, virtuous turns and thrusts to convey spiritual and moral truths. The vast 'Tyagaraja Reservoir' of *lakshana* and *lakshya sangita* saturated in *sastraic* and *puranic* lore and concepts finds its sluice gates left wide open! (The mountains and forests had not yet been denuded of trees and the Stanley Reservoir at Mettur was not there then.) Hence his 'Rajeswari' was mostly in full flow or floods. The fast current and swirling waters should surely have inspired and instilled like emotions and thoughts in the impressionable mind of the gifted raconteur. Like *Ramabāṇa* (arrow of Rama) to its quiver, his *manasika* detours and compositions roamed back to the central thought of *bhakti* and *mokṣa*. Family legacy, upbringing and environment, aspirations and goal in life and the affluence of an artistic mind in centripetal action rush in to give life to composing exuberance and outburst of artistic creativity and aesthetic poetic reconnaissance.

The various projected doubts, queries and mental strifes positively do not indicate or signify their real existence in his mind. **Never could it be.** All the remonstrances and hurled-out invectives are purely poetic indulgences. He knew quite well that Krishna had outlined the basic truth in *Gita* XVII-3 quoted earlier.

I

To dismantle the edifice (that Tyagaraja underwent the pangs of doubt, uncertainty, etc) zealously built up so successfully and over a period of time, a second look is desirable. Can anyone visualise Tyagaraja as a bhakta addressing Rama from the sober, soulful inner realms of his lofty heart,

'Parihāsakama? Māṭa padugurilō pogaḍinadi' (Vanaspati)
(Is it all fun to You, my Lord, when I seek refuge in You?)

It is poetic *sambhāṣaṇa* (address) or *rōṣokti* (grievance) or *sakhya bhava*. He keeps up the trend in many like:

'Parāku jēsina nī kēmi phalamu galigerā' (Jujahuli)
(By ignoring me, what great benefit do You derive?)

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'Chālakallalāḍukonna soukhyamēmirā?' (Arabhi)
(What special well-being You derive by uttering untruths to me?)

'Well, Rama, it is not an act of respectability on Your part to hold me to ridicule.'
- *Mariyāda gādayya* (*Bhairavam*) or *Idi niku mēragādurā (Punnagavarali)*.

In all these, the poet just projects a *khandita nāyika* or *amarṣa, vitarka* and such other emotive dance and dramatic approaches. The saint in Tyagaraja keeps the fulcrum *(bhakti)* safe and sure and applies the lever to its full leverage since he is aware that the Lord Himself has declared:

> 'He who, with supreme devotion to Me, teaches this supreme secret to My devotees, shall doubtless come to Me.'
>
> — *Bhagawad Gita* - XVIII - 68

Tyagaraja had been doing the same through songs, disciples, visitors, *bhajans, poojas,* etc. and he was sure of his elevation to Godhood. If not, would he have persisted in his chosen path of renunciation and *uncchavṛtti* with a faith and fortitude rarely excelled spurning material affluence? He knew the dictum of the Lord:

> 'Fix your mind on Me only; place your intellect in Me!
> Then you shall, no doubt, live in Me alone.'
>
> — *Bhagawad Gita* XII - 8

To suggest, as had been done repeatedly with religious fervour, that Tyagaraja was angry, had misgivings, hurled out accusations, etc. is not fair or creditable to the bard who is credited simultaneously by them with unfolding *Tyāgōpaniṣad!* It is as self-contradictory as the oration 'Brutus is an honourable man'. It may perhaps be fair to take into account Bhagawan Krishna's warning too here in assessing the work of the learned bard:

> 'The foolish think of ME, the Unmanifest, as having come to manifestation, not knowing My higher immutable and peerless nature.'
>
> — *Bhagawad Gita* VII - 24

Swami Chinmayananda writes on this:

> 'Men who lack discrimination and the capacity to perceive the subtle Truth that shines in and through the vast disturbances of the endless plurality, fail to realise the immutable and the peerless Self. In their preoccupation with the ever-changing glory of the perceivable, the *Prakriti,* they do not understand that "All this is strung on Me as a Row of Pearls on a string"...The idea of Divine Incarnation is accepted in Hinduism and according to its theory, **everyone is an**

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Incarnation to a degree! The clearer the mind and the purer the intellect, the greater is the effulgence of the Divine that beams out through the steadied and purified mind and intellect. Completely sublimating his lower nature *(Prakriti)* he becomes a Prophet, a Sage. Krishna, Rama, etc. are some of the examples.'

Can (rather, should) we not assume that Tyagaraja was fully aware of all these? Will it not be proper and correct to take that his Rama was only the personification of the Absolute Brhman, the Unmanifest, the Eternal and the Infinite? 'To mistake their physical structure, or the lingering traces of their mind, or the film of their intellectual personality, for the very Essence of Truth, is to make as miserable a mistake as taking the waves to be the ocean!' (Swami Chinmayananda). Could anyone dare dub Tyagaraja as *'A-buddhayah'?* **If not, what is the actual effect of stating that he was doubtful, angry, etc.?**

J

Here is a parallel case. Tyagaraja was a *grihasta* on the model of Janaka and other seers. Uthukadu Venkatasubbayyar was an ascetic-saint-composer who lived not far off Thanjavur and who attained eternity just two years before Tyagaraja was born. Absolute renunciate in life, his peripatetic abode was in jungles. Uthukadu itself means a jungle of fountains (of emotions!). The ascetic, who could not have got exposure to the varied arts as Tyagaraja was fortunate to have, has left songs of enchanting, titillating beauty, charm, fragrance and *śriñgāra*. (Perhaps *madhura śriñgāra* could come only from such godly souls!)

'The gopi's heart is restless like waves fondled by enchanting melody emanating from the flute of Krishna. The lilting tone brings in sweet recollections, "How You embraced me all alone in the woods and bestowed emotive delight?"

'Just then acerbic, apprehensive suspicion and jealousy raise their satanic heads in her love-lorn, impressionable mind. Sudden is her transition. Desperate and pathetic cries she raises, "Am I to cry here for You over a broken heart even as You flirt with another? Is it fair? Is it righteous? Is it *dharmic?*"'

The Bard of Uthukadu has no heart to leave her to bemoan and lament for long. His absolute ascetic but tender mould does not stifle artistic pageantry. Artistic instincts and impulses do not die out on renunciation but turn nobler, more fragrant and ethereal. This born dancer-dramatist-composer unleashes

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quite a dynamic change in the emotions of the gopi. He goads and drives her, as a puppet-show master does, to apologize and confess in self-reproach:

> 'How wrongful of me to have said that He steals hearts,
> when He is the embodiment of solicitude?
>
> — Song *Kallamē Ariyāda (Amṛtavarṣini)*

His renunciation is another aspect of his glorious life distinct from his magnificent *kavitvam*. Sage Tiruvalluvar has alluded to themes in which he would not have had any direct insight. Saintliness and poetical adventure are seen again in Sadasiva Brhmendral. The two aspects effloresced in happy unison in the *adwaitin*. It is the magnificence, magniloquence and sumptuous mastery and eminence of poet's fancies which run full stream. Saintliness withdraws itself for a while into a shell allowing the poetic ego to glow and shed lustre. The dichotomy in all such cases is self-evident. Saintliness does not inhibit poetic glow and effulgence. In fact, one is complementary to the other! Saintliness inspires and promotes the tone and content of the poet and the poet brings out the impressive, glamorous panorama of godliness before the saint. Why this dichotomy? The world has to survive! Arts and fragrant emotions are *sine quo non* for cultured life. If eminence cannot guide and show the path and lead lesser mortals, who else can? Exalted persons have demonstrated how absolute saintliness and asceticism could co-exist, flower up and blossom concurrently with artistic exuberance and excellence since the basic metal is of pristine purity and malleability.

That poetic or imaginative indulgence is vital to embellish poetry and songs and that without such adornments, poetry or song would lack appeal find notable recognition in *Mīmāmsāvarttik* (1-2-27). The celebrated Kumarila Bhatta has said:

> **'While writing stories and ancillary tales, short and long, sages Vyasa and Valmiki have taken upon themselves the role of poets and used their imagination, of course, mainly with a view to catch the minds of as many persons as possible and to bring home to the readers the greatness of the *dharma* that is being enjoined in the *Vedas* or the baseness of the *adharma* that is being prohibited therein.'**

Tyagaraja has faithfully followed the same code and mode of composition with rich and riotous imagination and skill to arrest and catch the attention of the people. In this, the saint in him dictates the *dharma* to be propagated and the poet in him weaves out the plan with spectacular pageantry. Is he not hailed as an *avatar* of Valmiki, who was both the proponent of Rama *bhakti* and the poet-mentor?

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K

In driving home eternal truths, one sees how Tyagaraja resorts to varied prosodic finesse; here is one:

'Why weep for ghee while keeping butter?
Why seek for ragi gruel keeping rice on hand?
Where is need for nurse when the mother is there?
Where is need for *vedanta* for a realised soul?
Why the help of a doctor to a healthy man?
If you have the wealth, where is need for almanac?
Why *Deiva-bheda* when one swears by *Sarvam Brhma Mayam*?
Where is the question of fear to the strong?

Why all these multi-sided thrusts? Just to drive home his theory of God-Consciousness, attainment of *sat-chid-ānanda.* In his devout songs of exquisite delicacy, moods and message, Tyagaraja demonstrates and reveals his multi-faceted personality and his—

—thorough grounding in grammar,
—mastery over lexicon,
—command of prosody,
—profound knowledge of *rasa* theory,
—insight into the sixty-four arts (*Chatuhsaṣti kala*),
—sweet voice with control over raga, tala, laya, etc.

All these go only to make and crown him as the perfect *vāggēyakāra.* He has left little without embellishment. Anecdotal allusions are delectable. Every song, to borrow a legal expression, has a 'speaking' message or concept. Every truth is driven home from different angles, in different modes. The songs reveal him as bhakta, saint, *lakshanakara, lakshya* exponent, *vāggēyakāra, naṭṭuvanar,* dramatist, dancer, musician, *bhāgavatā,* teacher, moralist - all rolled into one. His keen eye took due note of human frailties and failures and he strove to drive home the means to overcome them. As mentioned earlier, he is a *bhāva-rasa kaḍal.* His life is an amalgam of a bhakta *in excelsis* and a composer *par excellence.* This pluralistic phenomena in the life of Tyagaraja (and such other great seers, etc.) probably have their genesis in the all-pervasive, infinite personality of the Lord Himself. Declares the Lord in the *Bhagawad Gita:*

'Of all the causes of offspring, I am Kandarpa (God of Love).' X 28
'I am Vyasa among the munis;
I am Usana (Śukra) among kavih(s).' X 37

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The vast impressionable, all-inclusive canvas of the Supreme in macro scale lends credence to mini versions of the same multi–faceted, multi–disciplined characteristics in men of destiny created in His mould. They appear with a conscious or unconscious mission or mandate to enlighten and elevate humanity. The dancer pours forth myriad *bhavas* in a trice. Actors take on roles antagonistic to each other on the stage and retire to the green room for a hearty embrace. Musiri Subramania Ayyar sent waves of pathos among his audience just to smile soon after. The same actor takes on roles mutually exclusive involving contradictory styles of (double) acting. The poet brings out ravishing emotions in his creations. The sculptor chisels out impressive idols and icons. They play the destined roles for the hour or the occasion. **Saint Tyagaraja has done the same as a saint between him and God and as a *vāggēyakāra* between him and humanity.**

In the well-intentioned genuine anxiety to laud the glory of Tyagaraja's saintliness, one is inclined, or rather enthused, to sideline his impressive colossal stature as the most eminent composer of 18-19th centuries. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan too, in the quotation cited in section D, does the same. Tyagaraja was conscious of his mission and actually **presents a completion report** to the Lord:

> 'As ordered by You once, I have carried out and accomplished the tasks entrusted to me...'
>
> Work done but how?
>
> 'I have done it with love, dedication and sincerity.'
>
> Well, What then?
>
> 'Please turn Thy eyes on me for my salvation!'
>
> — *Song : Daya Jūchuṭa Kidi (Ganavaridi).*

His immaculate and effulgent life had to continue to run its full course. He knew he had to wait for the destined hour to retire and could never seek to hurry or hustle it contrary to scriptures.

His *adwaitic* life had two distinct roles to play – a gifted saintly life of fragrant gold and a distinct pluralistic role as *vāggēyakāra* of stature. Like the confluence of Cauvery and Bhavani or Ganga and Yamuna, these two coalesced in him with remarkable cohesive lustre and brilliance losing the identity of one in the other. Such pluralistic phenomena are seen in many illustrious lives. Janaka was raja-risi. Vidyaranya was an *adwaitic* sage, administrator and musicologist. Govinda Dikshitar too was so. Chanakya was king-maker and law-giver. Gandhiji was an apostle of truth and non-violence and a great crusader. The raga

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structure has *arohana* and *avarohana.* Creation itself has the male and the female. Just as the railway has two parallel lines and the river has two banks, perhaps this multi-sided or multi-faceted image is vital to convey momentous messages, convince and carry the populace to move forward!

In the temple flower-garden of Sri Pranatartihara, the Presiding Deity of Tiruvaiyaru, the fleshy flower-plant puts on two branches in its fervour not only to present flowers in abundance but to scatter and waft its perfumed fragrance far and wide. The southerly breeze arrives; how bewitching it is to see the two, their rich foliage and clusters of flowers fondle each other, embrace and even (most unashamedly, to the gaze of scores of the populace having their ablutions in adjacent Cauvery) kiss! The initiative flows in turns from the one to the other! Even in putting on the flower-bloom, they would seem to take on turns! One plant, two branches and what a common as well as distinct role each plays!!

Even so, 'talent and genius, one holding on the hand of the other...knowledge stands wedded to devotion; religion embraces action' and renunciation is coupled with mastery in music, musicology and composition! Renunciation, devotion and dedication to spiritual endeavour helped the elevation of the personal life of Tyagaraja while his lavish *vāggēyakāra* capability and eminence not only found an outlet for his genius but helped in lifting the world from the mundane to ethereal heights. **Thus to emphasize it again, he was a saint *par excellence;* he was a poet *in excelsis.* Both had a common role; each had a distinct field too to play. *Sans* his songs, he might have been only one of the unknown saints; *sans* his saintliness, his songs might not have attained their deserved approbation and acceptance.**

* * *

I left this write-up with T.S. Parthasarathy, an authority on Tyagaraja and a distinguished figure of stature in the world of music, when I left for Risikesh in October 1995 for kind perusal. On my return, he gave me an old article of his in *Indian Express* in which he had unequivocally observed:

> **'Tyagaraja must have made endless experiments although this aspect of him is often ignored by biographers who attribute his output to divine inspiration alone. Inspiration was there, of course, but his own endeavours should not be belittled!'**

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II

SRI TYĀGARĀJA AṢṬŌTTARA ŚATA NĀMĀVAḶI

(By Bangalore Nāgaratnammāḷ)

On Nagaratnammal:

The Prince of Renunciation, Tyagaraja had a matchless devotee, passionate admirer and a woman of marvellous attainments in Bangalore Nagaratnammal whose name stands eternally inscribed in invisible letters of gold in the samadhi of the saint at Tiruvaiyaru. Her career spanning the period November 3, 1878 - May 19, 1952 witnessed the convulsions of life from the abyssal and abysmal depths to Everestian heights of immaculate perfection and pristine glory. Tyagaraja had a distinguished and intellectual band of disciples during his life-time with equally unparalleled lines of succession but it was the lady from Mysore who stole the show of constructing the everlasting samadhi for Tyagaraja earning eternal approbation of the bard and others.

> 'Others came, sang and left. But her genius perceived something greater, enduring and substantial. She was able to look beyond herself and music rendition and focus her attention on the **source** of such resplendent music. She enjoys the unique distinction of having surrendered her all to the service of the Great Bard. The kumbabhiṣekam of the samadhi was done on January 7, 1925. She started the annual celebrations...spent her last years there...Quite fittingly, her samadhi is located near the samadhi of the Bard.'
>
> — *Another Garland*

Was she a scion of any affluent family? No; there lies the beauty, fragrance and unsullied grandeur of her career. Puttulakshmi, her mother, was a discarded non-descript in streets. Out of dust, Nagaratnam rose up to the dizzy echelons of the wise and the noble. No wonder, the President of India conferred the most appropriate title of *Tyaga Seva Sakta* on her on March 6, 1949. Here is a certificate from the distinguished Mysore Vasudevacharya to her music and conduct:

> "Her style of singing was religiously classical. She had accurate *layajnana.* Her voice combined the melodic sweetness of a female voice with the dignity of a male voice. As she had a sound knowledge of bharatanāṭya, her singing had an emotional appeal.
>
> A queen among dancers and singers, she was an apostle of modesty...a selfless soul and had the boons of beauty, learning and wealth...her respectful demeanour in the presence of senior vidwans

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attracted me. She stood as though come to offer worship, never even looked up...spoke little...a divine charm hallowed her beauty."

It would appear, the world had not the time to appreciate and applaud her in a measure that was her due. She had the blessings of resolute will-power, *yaga, yoga, tyaga* and spiritual *bhoga.* I feel it my duty to bring her gorgeous life to focus in this publication too by including her *Sri Tyāgarāja Aṣṭōttara Śata Nāmāvaḷi* for the benefit of institutions and individuals.

* * *

NĀMĀVAḶI

Om Śrīmadasmad Sadguruswāmi saccharaṇāravindābhyām namō namaḥ.

Om Śrīmad Kākarla vaṁśādi Chandrāya namaḥ.
Rāma Bṛḥma suputrāya namaḥ.

Śāntāmbā garbha sūkti mouktikāya namaḥ.

Śrīmad Kamalālaya puṇya kṣētra janma kṣētrāya namaḥ.

Śrīmad Pañchanada kṣētra nivāsāya namaḥ.

Śrīmad Kāvēriteera vāsāya namaḥ.

Śrī Tyāgarāja nāmāṁkitāya namaḥ.

Śoṇṭi Vēnkaṭaramaṇārvādi sadguru paramparānusantata dīna mānasāya namaḥ.
Anēka kōṭi Rāma mantra punascharaṇa tapassiddhi yuktāya namaḥ.
Parama Rāma bhaktāgrēsarāya namaḥ.

Vālmīkivaṁśa sambūtāya namaḥ.

Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa rahasyārtha prakāśakāya namaḥ.
Nāradānugraha sapta swarārṇavāya namaḥ.

Parassahasra Śri Rāma nāma kṛtipatayē namaḥ.
Uñcchavṛitti priyāya namaḥ.

Harināma saṁkīrtana priyāya namaḥ.
Prahlāda Bhakti Vijaya prabandha racanādurandharāya namaḥ.
Naukā caritra gavayitrē namaḥ.
Parabṛhmānusantānāyatta cintāya namaḥ.
Nāda sudhārasa paripūrṇāya namaḥ.
Mānasika pūjā durandharāya namaḥ.
Sadā śisya bṛinda parivēṣṭitāya namaḥ.
Sarva samadarśinē namaḥ.

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Lōka kṣēmakarāvatārāya namaḥ.
Nirasta Narastutayē namaḥ.

Śrī Rāmachandra pūjā dhurandharāya namaḥ.

Saṅgīta śāstra pravīṇāya namaḥ.
Nava tulasī mālā bhūṣaṇāya ṇamaḥ.

Śrī Rāmachandra çitta hitāya namaḥ.

Nirāśāya namaḥ.
Yadṛicchā lābha santuṣṭāya namaḥ.

Saṅgīta vidwatjnāna bhukti mukti pradāyakāya namaḥ.
Āndhra bhūsura kalpadṛumāya namaḥ.

Draviḍa dēśa tilakāya namaḥ.
Gāna bhajanāntara kīrtana tatparāya namaḥ.

Śaṅkara priyāya namaḥ.
Tāmasādi guṇa rahitāya namaḥ.

Śiṣya hṛttāpa harāya namaḥ.
Sadā nādōpāsana tatparāya namaḥ.
Gitādyakhilōpaniṣad sāra vētrē namaḥ.
Paramapāvanāya namaḥ.
Akhaṇḍānanda swarūpāya namaḥ.
Sadānanda bōdhāya namaḥ.
Satchitānanda rūpāya namaḥ.
Parama kāruṇika guravē namaḥ.
Satya jnānānanda swarūpāya namaḥ.
Sarva sākṣibhūtāya namaḥ.
Tatvamasyādi mahāvākya lakṣyārttha swarūpāya namaḥ.

Śāntyātīta kalātmikāya namaḥ.
Pūrṇāya namaḥ.

Puṇya śīlāya namaḥ.

Avyākṛtākāśāya namaḥ.

Śuddha buddha mukta satya swarūpāya namaḥ.

Śiva Viṣṇu bhēda rahitāya namaḥ.
Bṛhmānanda rasa nimagna hṛdayāya namaḥ.

Anēka rāga prakāśākhyaya namaḥ.
Pavamāna sadānugṛha pātrāya namaḥ.

Śrī Rāmachandra darśanōtsukhāya namaḥ.

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Bhaktajana hṛtpañjara sukhāya namaḥ.
Nāda sarasīruha bhṛṅgāya namaḥ.
Nānādāna gānānupamāna vijnānāya namaḥ.
Punarāvṛtti rahitāya namaḥ.
Karadhṛta tamburādi bhajana sadanāya namaḥ.
Sītā Lakshmaṇānjanēya vigrahārādhana tatparāya namaḥ.

Śrī Rāmachandra divya maṅgaḷa vigraha sandarśana nanditāntarangāya namaḥ.
Mahanīyāya namaḥ.

Śatarāgamālikā raçayitrē namaḥ.

Śrī Janakajāmṛdu pādāravinda dāsāya namaḥ.
Suswara rāga taḷa rasikāya namaḥ.
Vivādi mada haraṇa prabhāvāya namaḥ.

Śrī Tripurasundarī sēvakāya namaḥ.
Jitāri shadvargāya namaḥ.
Vimala hṛt kamalāya namaḥ.
Prahlāda Nārada Purandara Rāmadāsādi haribhakta stutikarāya namaḥ.
Niṣkāma karmōpāsakāya namaḥ.

Sajātīya vijātīya swāgata bhēdha śūnyāya namaḥ.
Sarva karma parityāginē Sri Rama Tāraka Mantra māṇikya tōraṇālankṛta nija hṛtmantrāya namaḥ.

Praṇava nāda maṅgaḷa vādya rava pūrita śrōtrānandāya namaḥ.

Sārāsāra viçāra visāradāya namaḥ.
Nijāchārya swahastābja vidita çidvastu tatva vēditē namaḥ.
Viṣama viṣa samasta kaluṣa viṣaya vimukhāya namaḥ.

Yāga yōga japa tapas satya śoucha yuktāya namaḥ.
Anavarata Rāmanāma sankīrtana tatparāya namaḥ.

Vēda vēdānta tatva vivēśaṇa nipuṇāya namaḥ.
Swarārṇava rahasya parijnātrē namaḥ.

Rāga sudhambudhi tatvarahasya prakāśakāya namaḥ.
Brhmānanda sudhāmbudhi marma vidūṣē namaḥ.
Yōgamudrān vidāya namaḥ.
Prāpta yōga siddhayē namaḥ.
Parama bhaktajanārcchita pādāra vindāya namaḥ.
Yōgīndraya namaḥ.

Kali kalmaṣa nāśanāya namaḥ.
Pañcha samādhi kṣētra sthitāya namaḥ.

Rāma kathā sudhā rasapāna matta chitta bhṛṅgāya namaḥ.
Mumukṣu jana suprītāya namaḥ.

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Mukti kānta manōharāya namaḥ.
Sarva samsāra rōga bhēṣajāya namaḥ.
Mithyā samśaya nāśakāya namaḥ.
Sarva śāstrārtha tatvajñānāya namaḥ.
Mahā vākya prabhāvajñānāya namaḥ.
Jñāna simhāsanādhīśāya namaḥ.
Kāṣāyāmbara dhariṇē namaḥ.
Sarva tatva pradarśanāya namaḥ.
Śrī Tyāgarāja Parabrhmaṇē namaḥ.

It is seen that biographical, kṣētra, śāstra, saṅgīta, karma, jñāna, bhakti, vēdānta and all relevant aspects of the life of the saintly Bard of Tiruvaiyaru have been exquisitely brought out by the paramabhakta śirōmani, Nagaratnammal. May this be used for poojas to the Bard!

Brief Bio-Data of Bangalore Nagaratnammal

Place & date of birth	:	Mysore - November 3, 1878
Parents	:	Vakil Subba Rao and Puttulakshmi
Training in/under	:	Sanskrit & Music under Giribhatta Thimmayya
		Violin under Venkitasami & Muthuswamy Appa
		Bharatanatyam & Abhinaya under Bangalore Kittanna & Tiruvenkatachariar
		Special training under Bidaram Krishnappa
Titles	:	Tyaga Seva Sakta, Vidya Sundari and Gana Kala Visarada
Died on	:	May 19, 1952 at Tiruvaiyaru
Publications	:	*Madhyāpanam* in telugu
		Aṣṭottara Śata *Nāmāvali* in sanskrit
		Pañchīkaraṇa Bhautika in tamil
Special achievements	:	Constructed Sri Tyagarajaswamy samadhi at Tiruvaiyaru.
		Organized Tyagaraja Ārādhana annual celebrations.

Worth of Artist

'The artist who does not feel the joy of creation is not worth his salt.'

—Sir C.V. Raman at the Music Academy, Madras (1933)

* * * * *

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III

PANCHARATNA KRITIS OF TYAGARAJA

An eye–view

The *Pancharatna Ghana raga kritis* are the *magnum opus* of the Bard which are invoked and sung at the time of Tyagaraja *Ārādhana* wherever it is celebrated. At many of the functions, the songs are delineated through bharatanatyam too. These songs are as well known among artistes and rasikas of Carnatic music as *Vande Mataram* and *Jana Gana Mana* are among students and nationalists. All the songs have a number of *charanas* (10, 10, 7, 8 and 10) and the *ghana* ragas *Nāta, Gaula, Ārabhi, Varāli* and *Srī* have been availed of. These songs enjoy rare embellishments, prosodic finesse and melodic majesty. Professor P. Sambamurti writes:

> 'There is nothing to surpass them from the point of richness of musical composition or the flowing character of their *sahitya.* His talent for conceiving melodies of variegated beauty interwoven with phrases of sparkling designs is seen in these. Lofty heights have been reached in the sphere of *sangita kavitvam.* The *sahityas* are noted for fine poetic imagery...'

T.S. Parthasarathy writes:

> 'The *Pancharatna* kritis are the most representative of Tyagaraja's art as a composer. He appears to have consciously summed up his musical genius in a quintessential form...a deliberate scheme of melody, rhythm and lyric...the *ettugada* swaras come in waves with an originality and daring that are breathtaking.'

These *'ratnas'* are in the form of *varnas* following the pattern of *tana* singing with the *ettugada* in *charana* in the *Arabhi* kriti and in *pallavi* in others. The *Nata* song is in sanskrit while the rest are in telugu. T.V. Subba Rao lists out the following factors which render the songs of the bard unsurpassed treasures:

> The force of a mighty and soulful personality breathing through every song.
> The irresistible appeal of divine love and tender pathos.
> The inimitable charm of poetic diction and limitless suggestions and opinions.
> The matchless beauty of music.
> The triple confluence of *bhava, raga* and *tala.*
> Surprising development of *sangatis.*
> Reflection of human experiences.
> Capsuled teachings of scriptural truths and music for *nādopāsana.*
> Supreme message of divine love.
>
> — *Studies in Indian* Music.

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The truths Tyagaraja expounds and advocates are primordial and universal which touch on the very centre of man's aesthetic, ethical, spiritual and social consciousness. And every song suggests that he has taken upon himself the mission to save, salvage and promote the spiritual well-being of mankind and in music he finds the finest and the most reliable tool to explore, expound, elaborate and execute. He is encouraged, nay, he feels duty-bound to suggest, correct and warn humanity of pitfalls and to ensure that his directives carry weight and substance, he depends on his absolutely pure and noble personal life *sans* blemish. He earns his supreme status and image by personal conduct and precept tested in the laboratory of Bhagwan Rama.

'For the sheer beauty of *sahitya bhava,* lyric, *lakshana, sangita bhava* and aesthetic appeal, the *Pancharatnas* are unexcelled', says N.S. Vaidyanathan.

> "Tyagaraja's Rama is rather more than the limited hero of the action of the Ramayana. Rama is all the Trimurtis and transcends them too as the illimitable *Parabrhman.* Such being the *stuti* of the Tyagaraja musical canon, each kriti becomes a recordation of all the nine *rasas* and *bhakti* becomes the ultimate rasa."
>
> — K.R. Srinivasa Ayyangar.

Jagadānanda kāraka (Nāta):

Jagadānanda Kāraka is like an *aṣṭottara archana* to Sri Rama extolling his unique characteristics, exalted attributes and myriad excellences. Presumably the bard visualises Sri Rama coming out in procession with all the gala paraphernalia and gets lost in His infinite glory. The raga was presumably chosen to indicate it. The majestic occasion and his own efflorescence as a *bhakta* find sweet reflection in the grandeur of the raga and the stately tempo adopted. As the song is commenced, generally in chorus, one feels surcharged by the exhilaration of an enlivening and elevating event. It has the combined effect of a hefty sixer off the first ball of the opening over in an international one-day match, of the Mettur Reservoir (feeding the Cauvery) surplussing even before the dam is due to be opened for irrigation, of the spiritually starved getting divine blessing without much ado and of Kuchela, on return from Dwaraka, gazing in total disbelief at the transformation of his wretched old house into a fine palace brimming with wealth and health. The raga has a majestic stride and the tempo is arresting and absorbing. Rama is that One God (in the *adwaitic* belief and conviction of Tyagaraja) who confers all round happiness not on him alone or the Bharatiyas only but on the entire Universe *(Jagadānandakāraka).* Tyagaraja is in the succession of that noble Bharatiya

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sages and seers who invariably invoked and sought benediction for the Universe and not, as patriot-*cognoscenti* Satyamurti once observed on the floor of the (then) Madras Legislative Assembly, 'God save our King and make him happy and glorious and destroy others'.

There are *mudras* in three charanas to indicate that the *vāggēyakāra* had perhaps added to the stock on two subsequent occasions! Such additions could possibly be due to fresh ideas presenting themselves or to suggestions from his disciples, many of whom were distinguished scholars, composers, musicians on their own right perhaps even before placing themselves under Tyagaraja's tutelage. **This needs close verification.**

Dudukugalananne dora (Gaula):

If *Nata* is invoked for presenting an address of welcome, for *archana,* etc., *Gaula* is taken for introspection. 'He is *Karunakara, Śaraṇagata Janapālana, Sumanoramana, Nirvikāra, Nigamasāratara,* etc., He is there. Am I qualified and eligible for his blessings?', would seem to be the under-current of thoughts which commend and command a self-probe. Rama is portrayed 'in his *Virat swarupa,* in his *Sarva Vyapakatva* and as *Purana Purusha',* says N.S.Vaidyanathan. Tyagaraja regrets, confesses, castigates himself, accuses and deprecates for omissions and commissions and for failure to make effective use of the human life he had been graciously endowed with. 'Which Prince but You (Rama) would condescend to come to salvage my life and redeem me!', his plaintive and grateful heart avers.

Here, Tyagaraja personifies the 'common man' who fails to encash on the excellent opportunity he has as a human being to seek and attain salvation. He is apostrophizing the misled humanity since there was nothing in his own life he needed to feel sorry for. If *Bhaja Govindam* emanated from the master to man, here it is couched as from the master to god. The penitent mood and pathetic appeal are for the erring humanity alone. He assumes all their sins and faults on himself like a genuine democratic functionary like Lal Bahadur Sastri taking culpability on himself. Further the old school of thought in Bharat had such high concept of spiritual morality and high sensitivity even to imaginary deficiencies and errors that most of the eminent persons had always been apologetic. They always felt that they were a shade imperfect! They pitched their standards so high that they never felt that they had scaled the heights.

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Sādhiñchenē O manasā (Arabhi):

Dr. V. Sadagopan of Oppiliappan Koil now in USA mentions that this was the first *Pancharatna* composed by Tyagaraja and adds,

> 'Krishna Chaitanyas like Sri Lilasuka saw only Krishna in all the gods while Rama Chaitanyas like Sri Tyagabṛhmam saw and worshipped even Krishna only as Rama.'

If *Jagadānandakāraka* is an address of praise and *Dudukugala* expresses self appraisal and deprecation, *Sādhiñchenē* takes on a different turn, mould and style. There is *nindāstuti* of grace, *nayika bhava* of a *bhakta* and soulful expression of praise of Rama - 'yes, He did that, He had achieved that; He had His own way!' There is copious extolment, exemplary admiration of Rama. The song is meant for the world at large too and *'manasa'* is the composite will of the universal community. A popular composition.

There is a passing tribute to Lord Krishna, the Cosmic Flautist, that he is a traditionalist (*sāmpradāyakuḍu*) in music and hero of the Stage! There is delectable comparison of the artistic advents of Krishna with the serene, lordly, majestic conduct and character of Rama. There is *adwaitic* faith in the Excellence of the Infinite.

In this song, the present practice is to resume the *anupallavi* after singing each of the *charanas.* On this, the eminent musicologist Prof. S.R. Janakiraman writes:

> 'From the point of view of *sahitya bhava,* the *swara* and *sahitya* of the *charanas* are to revert only to the *pallavi* as in the case of other *Pancharatnas.* Excepting the *Nata raga Pancharatna,* the other four present a semblance of the old order of the format of the *varna* as it got blossomed in the early 18th century A.D. The *Nata Pancharatna* cannot be for a greater part equated to the *varna* in as much as it has no specific refrain to be repeated at the conclusion of every *charana.* This aspect holds good in the other *Pancharatnas* too but with the marked difference that after all the charanas are sung reverting to the *pallavi* in each case, there is an appendage in the four *Pancharatnas,* viz.,
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | *Dudukugalananne dora* | — | *Satulaku konnāḷḷa* |
> | *Sādhiñchenē* | — | *Samayaniki* |
> | *Kanakana* | — | *Satatamu prēma* |
> | *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu* | — | *Prēma muppiri* |
>
> While the *Pancharatnas* in *Nata, Gaula, Arabhi* and *Sri* ragas are characteristically of the majestic medium tempo of *'tana varna', Kanakana ruchira (Varali)* should bristle with added beauty and splendour if sung, rather as it should be sung, in a tempo in between slow and medium gait.'

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Kanakana ruchira (Varāli):

This is an extended song inspired by the trend taken in *Sādinchenē*. The *rūpa mahima* and divine excellence of the Lord are brought in. The urge and endeavour of *Jivātma* to realise its *Paramātman* aspect is the theme. The great composer feels totally overwhelmed by and absorbed in the immaculate graces of the Lord. There is surrender through *sannidhi, darśana, kīrtana, śravana,* etc., well welded together for the emancipation and salvation of humanity. 'O mind! They got it, the priceless salvation; you can also get it if you follow their example', is the *modus operandi* - example and precept. *Sādhiñchenē* and *Kanakana ruchira* are practical lessons to those who desire to trek towards salvation. Like Ramadasa, Tyagaraja hails the *nāma mahima* extolling how sweet *nāma ruchi* is to chant and sing.

Endarō Mahānubhāvulu (Sri raga):

This represents the grand finale to the *Pancharatna kritis. Jagadānanda kāraka* is practically an invocation. Godly presence entails deep introspection in *Dudukugala*. There is recovery of spirit and hope in *Sādhinchenē,* which is fortified further in *Kanakana ruchira.* Spiritual exaltation is experienced. What is left is thus valediction and thanksgiving! The valedictorian is the presiding great dignitary of the One-Man University of Tiruvaiyaru himself since there was no better personage. But Tyagaraja enlists all categories of meritorious persons for warm approbation emanating from his heart. What a lavish list he has prepared with thought, exactitude and perfection! The fullness and purity of his gracious heart and art attain their zenith and flow to the brim in this song. Surely he should have opened up the sluice-gates of his large heart to pen this matchless composition sitting on the bank of River Cauvery running to its full potential with rare majesty and dignity or in the vast corridors of the big temple of Sri Pranatartihara (where even a mild sound like 'Ōm' is echoed back to infinity - a peculiarity rarely met with elsewhere) during a festival. There is copious feeling of respect, reverence and gratitude to the 'listed' personages, citation of whose names or categories swells up an undescribable noble feeling in the listener's heart. Tyagaraja himself could be identified with many of the categories presented by him because of his multi-dimensional stature. In the grand categories of *mahanubhavas,* one sees seers, sages, apostles, men of eternity and saintliness, of *bhāgavatās,* etc. Mere singing does not qualify for inclusion in the list. Those who sing with dedication and devout heart in full conformity with *swara, laya* and *raga* are those who qualify - i.e. there is no exclusion of *sahitya* or *sangita* or involvement. (Televised programmes show

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how many could apply for registration as *mahanubhavas!* Extended necks, stretched out heads, strained eyes, mechanical rendition with mind concentrated on the lens of the camera perhaps rob many of wholesome, enduring spiritual boons.)

Tyagaraja presumably felt that spiritual elevation of the multitude had been achieved by the time one completed the fourth song of the *Pancharatnas* and allowed his sense of gratitude to have full sway, expression and play not only on his own behalf but on behalf of all who had trekked with him as fellow pilgrims on the safe and sure melodious path to realisation.

A comparison is relevant here. Subramanya Bharati wove out exquisite songs on patriotism, etc. Finally, in his utopian world (since independence was far, far away then), he felt and found himself in independent India and in absolute exultation sang *'Āḍuvōmē, paḷḷu pāḍuvōmē'*. It is a multi-pronged projection of soulful rendition envisaging all-round, exhilarating development in free India in every field of human activity. *Endaro Mahānubhāvulu* is in the nature of the last section of a performance or project completion report thanking all for their enlightened work and service. It is also a call to humanity to appreciate and qualify to get enlisted in anyone of the categories of *Mahānubhāvas* for its own salvation! He has shown the many doors left open to mankind leaving each to choose his own according to his genius and outlook!

A full and elegant translation in tamil in strict conformity with *sahitya* and *sangita*, the rhythm, rhyme, *chaṇdas* and other embellishments of the *Pancharatnas* has been successfully done and published by Dr. (Prof.) Parthasarathy of Maraimalainagar. Musicians may avail of the translated versions when necessary with benefit.

'In 1940, Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar suggested that steps be taken to present the five songs at the *aradhana*. The text of some was not complete and the styles of rendition varied then. The two illustrious Secretaries of the Mahotsava Sabha (Musiri Subramania Ayyar and Tiruvizhimilalai Subramania Pillai) undertook to supply what was wanted. Next year, groups of musicians began singing the *Pancharatnas*. In 1942/43 Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar published the texts and notations for each. Alathur Subbier and others arranged for chorus rendition at Malaikottai also, which gave impetus to rendition at other places. Dr. Semmangudi Srinivas Ayyar has prepared a refined and improved *patanthara* for all the five kritis, published by Sri Sadguru Sangita Samajam, Purasawakkam. **May his version be taken as the standard one'**, writes Calcutta K.S. Krishnamurti.

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IV

MYSTERY BEHIND EPIC SUCCESS OF SYAMA SASTRI

Tactical manouevre and Underlying significance

A

He rolled the world into a mat! Yes, so he asserted by assuming the Samsonian title *'Bhūloka Chāpa Chutti'*. And he was no demon; but a *ghana* vidwan of proven merit and fabulous fame. The aggressive artiste was Bobbili Kesavayya who was as much feared as was respected. His *digvijaya* took him to Thanjavur, then the high-seat of art, architecture, sculpture and music. Kesavayya's ardent ambition was to hoist the flag of his success at that Wimbledon of Music. He threw the usual challenge. Alas! Little was he aware that it was to prove to be his Waterloo. Rajah Serfoji requested Syama Sastri of the Carnatic Classical Trinity to enter and save the prestige of Thanjavur Court.

The memorable contest saw Kesavayya handling the longest of talas with a baffling 128 *akṣaras* (unit measures of time), the famous *Simhanandana* tala presumably banking on its highest number of *akṣaras* per *āvartta* and also its numerous segmental break-up into six *gurus* (8 *akṣaras* each), six *chatusra laghus* (4 *akṣaras* each), three *plutams* (12 *akṣaras* each), two *drutams* (two *akṣaras* each) and one *kakapadam* of 16 *akṣaras*. Surely he should have expected to confound his opponent. (The Bobbili Larwood would not have dreamt of a Bradman taking the bat!) It was his ill-luck that brought Talaprastara Syama Sastri into the musical arena to face him. Sastri framed and invoked *Śarabhanandana* tala which had only 79 *akṣaras* per *avartta*. The herculean contest saw Sastri win and Kesavayya fading out.

Was it a tactical move on the part of Syama Sastri to invoke *Śarabhanandana* tala which has 38% lesser number of units than the other? Yes, it was a stroke of tactical mastery and mystic brilliance on his part in handling a tala apparently shorter in length but with in-built baffling jumble of segmental break-up, constituents with a jumble of odd and even *akṣaras*. While one *guru*, three *chatusra laghus*, nine *drutams* and two *laghu drutams* have even number of *akṣaras*, three *laghuvirāmams* (five each), one *laghu drutavirāmam* (seven) and one *drutavirāmam* (three) have odd *akṣara kālas*. This is apt to confound the musician to a considerable extent. Enormous expertise and absolute mastery are vital apart from unhindered, absolute attention. The jumble and jugglery of in-built segments comprising odd and even

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numbers and the attendant need and necessity for endless calculations and synchronisation at *avartta* ends (cyclical termini) was, perhaps, too much for Kesavayya who had banked on sheer length and number of constituting *akṣara-kālas.* The strain and stress in piloting through *Śarabhanandana* tala evidently were like the combined onslaught of Hiroshima bombing and Kobe earthquake disaster. It needed a Ramanujam-cadre of mathematical wizard to keep calculations even as one sings before an august assembly at a contest of epic proportions.

B

The second issue is whether the domination of *Śarabhanandana* tala over *Simhanandana* tala had any special significance. Yes, there it was and it had a psychoneurotic irritant too. The *sthala purana* of Tirubhuvanam near Kumbakonam provides the basis. 'Rains had stopped but not the drizzling!' runs the proverb. Nṛisimha annihilated Hiraṇya but He Himself turned wild and unapproachable. The universe in total disarray and panic turned to Lord Siva. Taking on the garb of Sarabha, He brought the monstrous impulses of Nṛisimha to a close. The belief that **Sarabha could prevail over Simha** was there and the intellectual Syama presumably banked on this significance too. In this, probably he drew inspiration from *Mahabharata* wherein Raja Salya having been forced by duplicity to act as charioteer to Karna constantly dinned into his ears that he could never hope to win over Arjuna and thus nullified the advantage of his providing magnificent help as charioteer by insidiously introducing an element of lack of self-confidence and distrust in the mind of Karna! A look at Sri Śarabhamurti would reveal how Nṛisimhamurti is less frightening to gaze at. This *murti* (idol) is worshipped at the great temple of Sri Kampahareswara (Lord who dispels fear psychoses) at Tirubhuvanam. The unique features of Sri Śarabhamurti with man-animal-bird syndrome of physical features is a grand concept on the unity of God's creations and a fine piece of art and sculpture at once conjuring but un-nerving. People worship Him for a variety of boons and probably Syama Sastri should have brought to focus in his mind His dazzling form and features!

> The magnificent tower over the sanctum of this temple is similar to those at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram and Kulottunga Chola III is stated to have built this and Darasuram temples eight centuries back. The central vimanam in cut-stone is a massive work of skill and splendour. The temple abounds in carvings too. *Kanchi Puranam, Virupanda Puranam, Akaśa Bhairava Kalpam* and *Tiruppugazh* praise Sarabha, which means Almighty conferring Mokṣa. Indeed, the tala named after Śarabha did confer success to Thanjavur Court and the benefit of retirement to Bobbili

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Kesavayya! Surely many would wish and pray for a visit to Tirubhuvanam and inquire into the significance of the number seventy-nine and how the idol of Sri Śarabhamurti does inspire or liaise with that number. Establishing a correlation between the number of akṣaras, viz., 79 and the subtle, perplexing, dexterously chiselled idol of Sri Śarabhamurti should be an astounding revelation.

(Note: Part A published in *Layam* II/8)

Performing Art

What it is?

'A performing art, in its simplest and most obvious form and meaning, is an art which lives only when it is being performed. That is, these arts live only in time. The sound of music lives only for the second it is created. But it leaves huge shadows of wonder and beauty and vanishes. Only a memory is left...(the) kind of experience provided is different from emotion recollected in tranquility.

'A musician's life, vocal or instrumental, is focussed on the instant of execution, because a performing art is a performing art only when it is being performed...A musician makes his body an instrument, at least for the duration of the performance, for the experience and expression of spirit.'

—Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan
at Talavadya Seminar II.

* * *

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V

MAHAKAVI SUBRAMANYA BHARATI

A colossus of Bhava and Rasa in Melody

A

We have not seen the Colossus of Rhodes, the hundred feet high bronze statue that was shattered in 224 B.C. in an earthquake. But we are fully aware that there lived from December 11, 1882 to September 12, 1921 a human colossus, a volcano of patriotism, a perennial spring of multi-pronged social reforms and a quintessence of ebullient *bhavas* and *rasas.* His intense active capsulized life was a sequence of struggles, not for his belly but for the freedom of his country and prosperity of humanity! An irresistible fighter-patriot-poet *(vāggēyakāra)* with passionate zeal to see his country freed from slavery, an amalgam of the invincible spirits of a Nethaji, Hampden and indomitable Vanchinathan, of the emotional and poetic build of a Kamban and Ilango (both of whom he had himself lauded as unparalleled) and of the reformatory zeal and musical expertise of Gopalakrishna Bharati and such other composers of eminence, he was an intellectual crusader.

The panorama of his works and contribution enveloped and ennobled every segment of society and theme of life and he was blest with the vision and *sadhana* of seers and sages. He was indeed poor and died poor since his rich and eloquent heart could never countenance mundane gains of the world. (It was Divine will that he should be so and it was ruthlessly complied with.) His knowledge of theory and practice of music was deep and surprisingly original and exceptional. The sweep and infinite graces of his songs mark him out as a master *vāggēyakāra* of modern India. In him, the traditional found itself wooed and wedded to the modern. He was indeed the bridge between the two even as Holy Sethu, not far off his Ettayapuram, bridged two nations once. His honeyed songs on scores of themes flowed out of a throbbing heart that was soulful, spirited and intensely human and Indian. His compositions are an epitome of spirited expression and masterly presentation pregnant with message in lucid language. There is dialectic felicity of presentation and clarity of thought. He has left few *bhavas* and *rasas* untouched. He was blest with the divine graces of Sri Durga and Sri Saraswati though Sri Lakshmi chose to ignore him miserably. That suffering makes the man a god is seen portrayed and finds corroboration in his life. Even if Sri Lakshmi were to confer her grace on him, it is unlikely he would have accepted it or drawn benefit therefrom! He lacked the will to grab it! Undeterred by the strong pursuing arms of the mighty British Empire, he kept aloft the flag of his mission till this planet thought of dislodging him prematurely

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as it did with many great souls from Adi Sankara onwards. He died twenty–six years before independence but in his lofty poetic visionary world, he exulted and revelled as a free citizen in a free India, drew up a hundred–years' plan for national resurgence and economic recovery and development, danced, trumpeted and drank the elixir of independence in a measure rarely witnessed by any, anywhere in the WORLD. His numerous songs were the outpourings of a far- sighted seer. Eulogies may go on but the good and great man died sixty days before he could complete forty years of age depriving the nation of his mature wisdom and a far-sighted revolutionary genius. He was fragrant gold and there has been no like of him. He was the first composer who had eyes to see and sing for the much maligned 'Common man'.

B

That unique, fascinating personality was Mahakavi Subramanya Bhārati. Bhārati has penned a very illuminating, enlightening article titled ***Sangita Viṣayam*** wherein he gives succinct expression to many resplendent thoughts and concepts to arrest the maladies ailing Indian music and dance and to advance the cause of melody among the melodic populace of Bharat. They are briefly resurrected below.

'Among living beings, only man and bird sing. (Why?) Birds sing probably as their minds get conditioned to the Music of the Spheres as they fly in the vast sky. (Does the Music of the Spheres inspire man? Man may not fly but is capable of allowing his vibrant mind on circumgyration. There the music is born in him!)

'At the sight of objects or when mind dilates over them, one or more of the *navarasas — vīra, roudra, adbhuta, śānta, bhayānaka, bibhatsa, hāsya, kāruṇyā* or *śoka* and *śriṅgāra* — are experienced resulting in the subjection and surrender of emotion-charged mind to divine arts like music, poetry or painting. Arts perish in the absence of *rasa*...Where the heart fails to vibrate sympathetically with the joy and sufferings of another, he may even write verses but that will be shorn of poetic depth, graces and soul. It is so with all arts.

'Those who sing without *bhāva-rasa,* portray only the corpse of music. Some musicians fail to appreciate that *navarasas* are the soul and essence of music. Quite a few of the songsters mutilate or murder the songs of Dikshitar, Tyagayya or Patnam Subramania Ayyar as they do not understand the meaning of the *sahitya* and consequently could not bring out inherent *bhāva-rasas.*

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'*Sahitya* should enjoy invigorating clarity. New songs should be encouraged at concerts. Ragas which reveal individual *rasas* in tune with *sahitya* should be chosen.

'Rajas have gone. It has therefore fallen to the lot of the musicians to educate, enlighten and involve the public in the interest of their own survival.'

Note: When Bharati died, Rajas were all still there; but the seer in him envisions the then unknown abolition of states and of privy purses that was to happen several decades later.

'Emotions, like *vīra, roudra, adbhuta, bībhatsa, bhayanaka, hāsya* and *śanta* should receive adequate coverage to invoke and enlist the involvement of public. Songs bereft of *rasa* should not be sung.

'Dikshitar kritis have *gāmbhirya* and *lakshanas* but will not be of use as they are in sanskrit. (Dikshitar died where Bharati was born! Probably Bharati speaks from the angle of the lay.)

'Tyāgarāja kritis constitute an ocean of *rasas* and are primarily responsible for the survival of Carnatic music. In spite of mishandling by musicians, they still hold the field with their original effulgence. (He wrote this about eight decades back and how true it is even to this day!) Tyāgarāja has chosen ragas and talas to bring to focus the *rasa* aspect. "Sing songs like

Chakkani rāja mārgamu (Kharaharapriya) or
Nannubrova Nīkinta tāmasamā (Abhogi) or
Mārubalka (Srīranjani).

You follow the underlying message easily since the composer knew his art very well. It is not that Tyagaraja strived hard to compose songs. There was truth and sincerity in him and they found easy vent and reflection in his songs.

'Singing songs in languages not understood by public will strangulate the art (music) itself. Audience-involvement is vital.

'Tala is but an aid to music and not *vice versa.* The joy of melody should not be sacrificed at the altar of excessive *laya.*

'Northerners have a voice of bronze or gold while southerners have poor voice - presumably so, for lack of practice in open or *akāra sādhana* as per *sastras* with full-throated rendition in forests, tanks, riversides, etc. False voice should be scrupulously avoided.

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'Musicians should be bold and happy *(men sana* in *corpore sano).* There is no dearth of proper succession to stalwarts like Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar or Sarabha Sastri. But they should heed to the advice given herein.

'Women can improve the standard of singing by giving better attention to *laya.* Music in women is vital to promote happiness and *Lakshmi Kaṭākṣam,* since women have greater lien on music than men. In olden days, woman was viewed as *jiva* and man was taken as *ātma* in music. Traditional domestic and folk music should not be neglected particularly by women. If they turn to drama music (now film music), musical sensitivity would die.

'Harmonium should be kept out. "Play on veena badly, it hurts the people in the house. But play badly on harmonium, the whole street is hurt!" It suppresses the beauty of rendition. Tambur is best as drone. Veena is best for women. It confers *śānti.'*

C

Bharati refers to the work *Rasa Bhaṇḍāra* for its valuable guidelines such as:

"Theory follows current practice, knowledge and experience as enlarged. *Rasa dṛṣṭi* has origin in Nature but can be acquired by association with *rasa* experts or through *bhakti.* That one attains *jnāna dṛṣṭi* through *citta samādhi* by winning over *rāgadvēṣa* - even without training – is a *sastraic* truth.

"The land that prefers *bhayanakah* and *śoka* (fear and sadness) will be their victim. *Naiśya bhāva* (slavish temperament) inheres in people under subjection and it should be eschewed.

"Witnessing display of *navarasas* in fair proportion confers joy and *Lakshmi Kaṭākṣam.*

"To invoke *Natya Śastra,* bhakti is essential. *Bhak*ti can secure for one all arts. *Upasana* is given prime place for acquisition of *rasa jnāna."*

While ending the article *Sangita Viṣayam,* the inherent irrepressible sense of humour in Bharati comes to the fore. The bhagavatar whom he enlightened with the maxims in *Rasa Bhaṇḍāra* took the book on the plea of taking a copy but did not choose to return!

D

It may be appropriate to cite a song or two wherein Bharati draws on the different *rasas.* In fact, there are few songs of his which do not resonate with brimful of *rasas.* Bharati was a born Poet of *Bhāva-Rasa* with few peers. He was an Ocean of *Bhāva-Rasa—Bhāva-Rasa Kaḍal.*

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Vira/Roudra (in *Pānchāli Sabadam*) :

'Indap pādakak Karṇanai pōril madippēn.
Pōrtṭōḷilil vindaigal kāṇbāi,
Hē Bhūdalamē! ... ...

(Arjuna vows and addresses the world that he would finish Karna and that it would witness wonders in warfare then).

'Om Dēvi Parāśakti, āṇai uraittēn.
Pāvi Duhcchāsanan sennir – Anda
Pāḷ Duryōdanan ākkai rattam
Mēvi iraṇḍuṅkalandu – kuḷal –
Midinirp pūśi narunei – kuḷittē
Śivi kuḷal muḍippēn yān..."

(Draupati vows that she would first anoint her hair with the mix of the blood of Duhcchasana and Duryodana and would then only dress up her untied tresses. A noble, soul-stirring and thrilling chapter in *Mahabharata.*)

'Innal vandiḍumpōdadarkkañjōm
Taittirunāḍenil inik kaiyai viriyōm!'

(Eṅgaḷ Nāḍu in *Bhūpalam)*

(We dread not difficulties; nor shall we despair of, if it is for motherland.)

Many songs are soaked in vibrant and even virulent *vīra* and *roudra rasas.* Bharati having been a matchless patriot-poet fighting for the freedom of his motherland, could countenance no weak-kneed, half-hearted approach or vacillation. His songs are so rich in verve and vibrancy that even a weakling would stir up to dynamic action. 'Arise, Awake, Act' was his *Veda.*

Adbhuta :

'Eṅgirundu varugudo, Oḷi
Yevar seiguvado, aḍi tōḷi...'

— *Veyṅguḷal* in *Hindustan Kapi*

(The gopi in Bharati wonders and enquires of her sakhi on the source wherefrom wafts the enslaving melody from flute - Yamuna or forest or birds? A titillating theme for *abhinaya,* indeed.)

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Bībhatsa : *'Nenjinil uramuminṟi, nērmait tiramuminṟi Vanjanai seivāraḍi - Kiḷiyē.'*
(Bharati directs his scathing contempt and disdain on pseudos, idlers, etc. in all walks of life.)

Bhayanaka : If Bharati can be faulted for lack of any congenital emotion, it is fear; and fear alone. The song just above cited pours out scorn on those suffering from
'Acchamum pēḍimaiyum aḍimai śirumaiyum
(Fear, cowardice, slavish mentality, these three he could never tolerate or countenance.)

Hāsya : *Kaṇṇan, En Sēvakan* and many others are master-pieces of sparkling humour and explosive wit.

Snake-charmer plays on flute. What is the lyric? Just *'tana, tandattāna, tana...'* what is its meaning?
Bharati makes a child to clarify it :
'Kāḷikkup pūcchūṭṭinēn; adaik kaḷudaiyoṉṟu tinna vandadē.'
(I offered flowers to Goddess Kāli; should an ass come to eat it!)

Śāntam : *Kaṇṇammā - Enadu Kuladeivam* and others.
'Tunbam iniyillai, śōrvillai...'

Bhakti: Bharati reflects the pure serene Indian spirit in presenting exquisite, multi-pronged songs devoted to Gods and Goddesses to suit the genius of young and old bringing to focus the fundamentals of religions and philosophies as is relevant in current context. Every segment of society, tastes and culture including secular and pseudo-secular elements can draw inspiration from his captivating songs of matchless beauty, clarity, exhilarating music, real and fanciful imagery and pregnant message couched in flowing lucid language. Even the despicable feather of a crow does not fail to inspire his animated soul with the captivating complexion of Lord Krishna *(Kākkai śiṟahinilē)*. Even so, the tastes of tamarind and fruits do not appeal to the qualms of his belly but instead reveal *adwaitic* truths! Bharati handles every form of *bhakti* with candid perfection, felicity and passion. One could see in his songs the varied categories of authentic bhakti our ancients have classified such as—

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sannidhi	*archana*	*śravana*
darsana	*ātma nivēdana*	*pādasēvana*
sambhāṣaṇa	*vandana,* and	*vāṭsalya*

E

Let us bale out a few from his well of ambrosial waters:

Nalladōr vīṇai śeidu: The song is addressed by the musical poet of Ettayapuram to the Supreme Celestial Artiste. He pleads—

'You have made out an exquisite veena:
Will you choose to throw it into a dustbin?
Even so, You have created me with a burning intellect.
Can't You equip me with strength?'

(For what, one may wonder!)

'For this land to prosper!
Are You to let me rot as a burden to earth?'

This is *atma nivedana,* pure and absolute. Service and sacrifice to Bharat were the one and only mission he could conceive of and not his starving belly or those of his dear wife and children! If his life and the lives of such Bharatis do not remedy present ills and hiccoughs of a crazy materialist multitude, Bharat can hope for no salvation. Let us recall a parallel.

In *Anandamath,* Bankim Chandra Chatterjee makes patriot Satyananda tell his guru:

**'O noble-hearted one! I don't crave after Knowledge.
I shall fulfil the vow I have taken. Bless me so that
my devotion to my Mother (Bharat) remains unshakable.'**

That was the spirit of Bharatis as reflected in Bharati's *'Taṇṇir viṭṭo vaḷarttom, Sarvēśa? Ippayirai kaṇṇirāl kārtom*!' The plant of freedom movement was not fed with water but with **tears!**

Kāṇi nilam vēṇḍum: This is another magnificent song wherein he places a blue-print before the Goddess of Power and Energy, Parāśakti :

'O! Parāśakti! I need a kāṇi of land (two and a half acres)'.

(There is a subtle beauty in the extent sought for. According to rules of assignment in force, free assignment is permissible only upto that extent! The request was made long before the advent of independence. Reluctant to approach the foreign ruler, he approaches the Supreme. Whether Parāśakti just

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smiled it away or was inclined favourably, is not known. Before She could nod either way, Bharati hurries to qualify his request with riders.)

'You should construct an elegant palace thereon and give it.
'Near the well, there shall be ten or twelve cocos!'

Will that suffice? No, cries Bharati with supplemental riders:

'Moon shall shed its cool rays peering through coco leaves!'

(Why the moonlight and why should it not lit up the land direct? Direct moonlight looks prosaic to the Bard of Ettayapuram. It will be flat with no poetry or romance in it! Or, was the bard having thoughts of Lord Krishna's scientific message to Arjuna in the *Bhagawad Gita*—XV-13?

> 'Permeating the earth I support all beings by My energy; and having become the liquid moon, I nourish all herbs.'

Swami Chinmayananda clarifies that—

> 'The Infinite Consciousness functions through the earth and gives fields their special capacity to sustain and nourish the vegetable world. When the flora grows up, it is the same Consciousness functioning through the moon and manifesting as moonlight that nourishes each plant and fruit with its essential food-value (vitamins).'

(Well, then what?) 'Cuckoos shall sing to my hearing!'

(Bharati will not be content even if the late lamented Veena Chitti Babu had pricked up his veena to produce cuckoo calls. The original, he wants as he is a poet, composer, musician and a musicologist. The land, well and cocos are there; to enliven the donee, the cuckoo sings to his hearing, soft and pleasing. Ettayapuram is nearer the equator and lies in a hot dry tract. Hence, thoughtfully, Bharati indents for:

'The southerly breeze shall waft to add to his pleasure!'

The virgin mind of the foremost modern poet from tamil land then wonders how a human Siva could be without Sakti and probably enthused by the life of Apostle Sundaramurti Nayanar, he adds :

'A chaste wife too, please; and
She should sing well too!'

(Parāśakti probably smiles at this utopian prattle and one-man project!)

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'In our joy, poetry shall flow...'

Here poetry refers to songs since this musical soul seeks a singing cuckoo and a musical spouse. Ettayapuram is amidst a vast carpet of semi-arid tract and with a musical wife by his side, he is reminded of security:

'In that open wooded land, dear Mother,
You shall provide us the needed security.'

When he comes to seeking a wife, a musical wife and some security, he takes a subtle cajoling stance, as 'Parasakti' gives place to 'Mother' in the address. Did he sit tight and choose terms? They flow out of a vivacious heart like the perennial fountain down the hill of divine love. Bharati, the far-sighted author of the first hundred years' plan for independent Bharat, is conscious that his plan should lay bare the resultant benefits that is expected to flow out in a *quid pro quo*. He addressed Parāśakti for a wife (though Sundaramurti Nayanar directed his request to Lord Siva) and like Appar's *'Nin kaḍan ennaiyum kāppadu'*, he had asked for security. Now, Bharati lays candidly what he is and how different he is from pseudo-patriots. He forgets his starving belly and those of his kith and kin. Having got an audience with and a chance to speak direct to Parāśakti, he outlines the grand purpose for seeking land, well, cocos, cuckoo, moonlight, musical wife and security:

'With the mastery of my music
You shall protect this Universe.'

'Astounding! Bharati, how absurd you are! Having got all you required from Pārāśakti, you have shattered the edifice and squandered them all meekly surrendering them all to the nation and its prosperity! Nay, **not only the nation; to the whole Universe!**' : would not many think so?

'Bharati was conscious that Bharat (as our ancients always vouched for and as Vivekananda thundered at distant Chicago) always stood for *Sarvē janāh sukhino bhavantu, Ellōrum inburriruppadaṉṟi vēṟoṉṟum aṟiyēn Parāparamē,* etc. In line with our seers and sages, Bharati does *ātma nivēdana* for the well-being of the Universe! What a monumental, magnificent mission and stupendous role he had conceived and carved out for himself? That was Bharat of Bharati's days (notwithstanding the usual, though negligible quota of traitors and imperial servitors as is in every part of the universe.) Where could Bharat be if all are Bharatis? A Manthara, a Śakuni or a Jayachandra was an exception in Bharat of old but was perhaps vital to rekindle the ingenuous flame.

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Is there any significance in seeking all the favours just to place his musical asset at the feet of Parāśakti? He is conscious that the music for the envisaged noblest cause should be weighed in solid gold of absolute purity. How is it possible to present such divine music without the virgin environment, *sine qua non* for inspiration! The acoustics and environment he indents for are the best any sound engineer-*vāggēyakāra* would vouch for. But why a wife to distract? He had said that female is *jiva* of music and he is addressing a ***Goddess.*** The cause is great; the stakes are high and his devotion and dedication are immense. How could the poet then be without poetry? Poetical efflorescence in Bharati sparkles and conjures at the very thought of a musical wife! He sees the *jiva* and not the flesh that encases it!

One may, perhaps, wonder whether the Parāśakti, after all, was in need of the mastery of his music to protect this Universe. Yes, the Parabṛhman does need. There is a *Rig Vedic* chant—

Śibam rājantsupathā yahṛavāṅvadhīma tē papuṣō vṛṣṇyāni I

(With prayers and praises, **we shall augment your energies.**)

The *Kannan-Kannamma* songs lilt, entice, enchant, ennoble. The fascinating group may be summed up as *bhāva-rasa taraṅgiṇi.* There is primeval, rustic, uninhibited solicitude and passion and urban elitist polish, finesse, elegance and embellishment, besides lofty excellence of conception, lyrical beauty and musical charm.

The list is endless indeed. Whatever Bharati touched had turned gold!

F

It is indeed inconceivable why Parāśakti ignored Bharati's fervent plea for meaningful and productive boons, genuine and guiltless. It would indeed appear that the plea to surrender his musical prowess and excellence had been accepted but what of the other part? Has not there been a breach of trust and contract? How could it be called otherwise? Bharati had been a grateful *bhakta* as confirmed in *Kāḷikku Samarpaṇam* wherein he in his twenty-seventh year gives expression to what She had done him. And the remaining ten years and odd? She...

(It was 8.40 a.m. on November 23, 1995. As I came to this passage, Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu's recorded song *Paralōka Bhayamulēkane (Mandāri)* was broadcast by All India Radio. Tyagaraja avers therein that possessing elephants, horses, flower-gardens, houses, etc were apt to delude people to mistake that this is *'Dēvalōka'.* Was it then an answer to my doubts?)

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If that be so, could it be that the poet's request for acoustics, environment, etc had been mistaken by the Goddess as material assets which could corrupt or pervert even the incorruptible mind of Bharati? As She had been in need of his elevating, soul-charging music and as it is known that art prospers and revels only amidst indigence, was She afraid that the merit, grace, grandeur and flow of songs would be arrested or hindered if such requests were conceded? Parāśakti with ruthless efficiency chose to keep innocent Bharati, his life and his artistic munificence unsullied by material boons! (Do not we, the Bharatis delight in this concept? Does not one see fragrant flowers fading out amidst chill penury while criminals, smugglers and black-marketeers flourish?)

G

There is another angle to Parāśakti's lack of response. It is *vedantic* based on the splendid equation—

Bharati = Parāśakti

This is the *adwaitic* truth, concept and faith that Man is God once he 'realises' it. Bharati turns a philosopher incarnate. The revolutionary opens an effulgent page in his unique life and in the footsteps of Sage Sankaracharya cries out:

'Sāmi nī, Sāmi nī, Kaḍavuḷ nīyē
Tatvamasi, Tatvamasi, Nīyē aḥdām.'

(You are God, You are God, You are God.
That Thou Art, That Thou Art; You are That?

"Poyyum, meyyum Śivanadā
Eṅgum Śivanai kāṇadā..."

"Saktigaḷ yāvum aduvē..."

"Tōṉṟi aḻivadu vāḻkkai - idil
Tunbattinbam verumai enṟoḍum
Mūṉṟil edu varumēnum - Kaḻi
Mūḻgi naḍattal Parāśiva Mukti."

Bharati, the genius, presents himself as a Vedantic scholar *par excellence* pouring out the *Mahāvākya* from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* etc. in his songs. What is 'I'? *'Aham Bṛhmāsmi',* answer the Upaniṣads. Bharati repeats it in *'Yaṉ',* meaning 'I' :

"Bṛhmamē yānenap pēśuvar, peśuha!
Bṛhmamē yānenap pēśināṟ periyōr!"

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(I am Brhmam, declared the enlightened.
So, speak in that strain.)

Apparently, one is tempted to accuse and blame Parāsakti as hard-hearted. But the *adwaitin* in Bharati had **realised** what he was, what he was for and what he had to practise. He was a **'realised'** soul which lit up effulgent sparks of patriotism, social consciousness, economic advancement and everything else that go to make 'Man' not only 'a human' but also 'God'!

H

A restless soul, indomitable Bharati's intolerance of anything that smacks of imperialist orientation was well known. Here is an episode from V.S. Shanmugham Chettiar of Kanadukathan:

'I want a hundred rupees urgently; will you give?'

'O yes, here it is', said Chettiar giving the note.
'I presume this is for me', said Bharati turning the note this side and that repeatedly.
'Why doubt that?'
'I presume I have full rights to use this in whatever manner I like.'
'Certainly.'

Suddenly Bharati tore it to pieces to the utter bewilderment of Chettiar. Surely Bharati could not stand and tolerate the insignia of the foreign power on the note. Such strange actions of his were many.

A memorial has been constructed by nationalists at Ettayapuram not far off the memorial to Muthuswami Dikshitar. T.K. Brothers enacted on May 19, 1945 the drama *Avvaiyar* to raise funds for it. When the *aṣṭi* of Gandhiji was immersed at Srirangam in the Cauvery in the presence of an unprecedented crowd, T.K. Shanmugham sang Bharati's song on Gandhiji *Vāḻga nī Emmān.* The songs of Bharati are sung for everything that is national or patriotic. His songs are public property. Prof. Va.Ra. Parali Nellaippar, T.P. Minakshisundaram, T.K. Shanmugham and like-minded leaders met Chellamma Bharati and Thangamma Bharati, when the wife and the daughter of the patriot-poet graciously relinquished all their proprietary rights. Sacrifice was the proud privilege and asset of patriots. May Bharat realise the dream of its resurgence!

An innocent digression. Va.Ve.Su. Ayyar, the inveterate enemy of imperialism and friend of Bharati, would say just to provoke Bharati, 'No poet is born after Kambar and Ilango', taking a line from Bharati's own song. Bharati would turn to Bharatidasan with a fallen face and say,

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'Subburatnam, do you hear what Va.Ve.Su. says? He says that there has been no poet after Kambar and Ilango! What does he mean? Am I not a poet?'

Bharatidasan and Ayyar would relish such reaction and laugh.

* * *

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Period	:	December 11, 1882 - September 12, 1921
Place of birth	:	Ettayapuram where Muthuswami Dikshitar attained immortality in 1835 and Subbarama Dikshitar published the first thesaurus on Carnatic Music, *Sangīta Sampradāya Pradarśini* in 1904.
Parents	:	Chinnaswamy Ayyar & Lakshmi Ammal

Studied at Tirunelveli and Benares. Served as tamil pandit and as Assistant Editor, *Swadesamitran,* the widely-read nationalist daily in tamil of resurgent India. Scholars conferred the title of *Bharati* on the young lad of eleven in 1893. Published the paper *India. Vide* pages 342-4 of *A Garland* for details.

A memorable gesture:

Sangita Kalanidhi Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar was a colossus of a musician-composer and *harikatha kālakṣēpa maestro.* S.G. Kittappa was the Prince of the Stage unsurpassed for his melody. The prince approached the colossus for a song for him. The colossus responded. As an additional gesture, he desisted from putting his signature 'Harikesa' to it! The song was the memorable drama entry-song and super hit of Kittappa—

Āṇḍavan Darisanamē, Tyāgēsan
Tāṇḍavam darisanamē!'(Jonpuri)

* * *

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VI

TRAVAILS AND TRIBULATIONS OF AN ARTISTE

It was not all *bṛhmānandam* to sing!

'THE glimmering landscape was just fading out anxious to take on a well-earned repose having been the target of a revengeful sun for over ten hours. I entered the ample gates of a lush green lawn with rows of chairs aesthetically arranged in crescent shape facing the dais from which, I supposed, I was to give the concert in Carnatic classical music. Sure I was overwhelmed by the prospects of a successful and satisfying concert and the lingering travel weariness vanished that instant. I had practised much and had been looking forward to this vital appearance at Madras with hope and prayers to improve my professional prospects. At the appointed hour, I was dutifully escorted to the dais, the sidemen following. I ascended the steps with the confidence and joy of winning the acclaim of the rasikas.

'I stood up to pay my *pranāms.* Lo! was there an audience at all? There was a measly thirty-one and I counted them all in a trice! My heart palpitated and sank under the shock. My mind became a hotbed of confusing thrusts and pulls. While my conscious mind dutifully sought and struggled to render the songs, the subconscious mind was turbulent, the prime doubt being—

"Am I to face a thousand chairs, all vacant? Will more people be coming?"

'The exhilaration I felt as I slid through the painted gates vanished like vapour. I went through the invocation song intensely praying with suppressed sobs not at all for any bigger crowd but for the apology of the audience present not melting away! Even as I was phrasing through the kriti *Vātāpi Gaṇapatim,* my mind was agitated on the dismal prospect of the concert being blitzed or eclipsed by the few present deserting - not because of want of melody, *sukham* or *soukhyam* in my music but because of the frightful loneliness of sitting amidst a gruesome thousand chairs left as orphans and abandoned with contempt.

* * *

'In my mental agitation, I had taken up *Nāda Lōluḍai Bṛhmānanda Mandave (Kalyanavasantam)* out of turn. Amidst my strife-prone grief and massive anguish, I was agreeably struck by the matchless glory and relevance of the *sahitya* (libretto):

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'Oh mind! Lose yourself in *Nāda.* Gods have done so with benefit!
Do it yourself **now** and attain the highest bliss.'

My heart wept, "Now? O! Gracious saint and guru, here is a paltry audience and I have to sing at least for two hours. How can I have the *equipoise—śāntam* to lose myself in *Nāda?* Pray, bless and guide me."

— *Sings Nāda Lōluḍai Bṛhmānanda..*

"Perhaps, others may come leisurely, being a working day, you see", my conscious mind sought to rouse my spirits patting my subconscious with caressing solicitude.'

— *Sings Nāda Lōluḍai Bṛhmānanda..*

'None comes ... That old lady and another start! Why? What head-going work have they at home? Can't they remain for a while enjoying the moon-lit lawn and the melody?... Why should those four people sit at the farthest ends as if they are *dwārapāḷakās* guarding the frontiers of Bharat...That man is intensely reading...is it Milton or Defoe? These three ladies in the second row huddle together and chatter as if they have just stepped out of a satellite! *Chey Chey,* what sort of people are these distanced from music, art and culture!'

— *Sings Nāda Lōluḍai Bṛhmānanda..*

'This sabha places a thousand chairs as if the whole city is going to converge! What a Secretary is he - not able to procure even a fifty rasikas...

'Suppose a few more leave? It should be terrible! Am I a Ramakrishnananda with his spiritual eminence to continue to sing before a vacant auditorium? Shall I seek to close after ninety minutes?...There, that bald-headed man stirs out, and drags his unwilling hag as if they are new-weds! Can't he leave her, the good lady who seems to like my music?

— *Sings Nāda Lōluḍai Bṛhmānanda..*

'A thousand chairs vacant! And these people have fully lit up the auditorium. Vacant chairs laugh and sneer at me and seem to shout in chorus —

"We are vacant, good lady!
We are vacant, Good lady!
You are singing, my good lady;
To whom art thou, my good lady?"

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'Can chairs too get animated and disparage! Can't the sponsors, Narayan & Omkara bring in a vanload or two to provide a semblance of audience? What sort of sponsorship is this? They could, as well, have said, "N(arayan) O(mkara) = No; yes, a flat No."

— *Sings Nāda Lōluḍai Bṛhmānanda...*

'Sponsor "N" starts and three run after him...Will they come back?...I forget; "did I sing the *anupallavi* or am I beating about the *pallavi ad infinitum* in my confusion as if I sing for a *nṛitya?*... What does it matter? None seems interested. I may even switch over from *Kalyanavasantam pallavi* to a *Khambodi anupallavi* of another kriti; and there may be a feeble applause too! (Ha, ha, ha, smiles to herself in agony.) Shall I try? (A mischievous smile flashes through her face — handsome, kindly but crestfallen.)... No, no, that is not fair to the art or to the few good rasikas who may be here or to me.... God, stop this type of vicioius thinking...let me lose myself in *Nāda*...The sabha could have inserted a line in advertisement,

"Rasikas invited".

A few may trickle in. Perhaps not. What of those who do not turn up? Will they still be rasikas? They do not come and so they are not! Quite a fine conundrum, indeed! A punishment in a *quid pro quo?*... The sabha could appoint non-paying ex-officio members to rush in when there is a siren call like the quorum bell in parliament!'

— *Sings Swānu phalaprada saptaswara—*

'That lady is moving out with her grandchild. Why not close the gate for a while? Perhaps dangerous...suppose someone scales the compound wall or jumps over the fence and lands in a gutter or rubbish-heap on the other side? Have I switched back to *anupallavi* from *charanam* half-way? Lord, help me...'

— *Sings Swānu phalaprada saptaswara—*

* * *

(The song ends. An anaemic applause quite inaudible is mechanically donated by habit. The artiste takes up Sivan's *Karpakāmbikē, kaḍaikaṇ pārtenai, kāttaruḷ Karuṇākari — Bilahari* — with genuine bhava-laden prayerful heart. The audience factor reasserts.)

'The sponsors could have arranged for some mini exhibition or some gifts...some chatter-boxes may hum around buying nothing, hearing nothing and promoting

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nothing...I shall finish soon...This *tani*...These two people, how they prolong it as if Mani and Dakshinamurti Pillai they are! But how sincere are they? Poor artistes, how good they have been? *Appah!* They are finishing.'

— Resumes *Karpakāmbikē...*

(The next piece with raga alapana and swara delineation is *Tera Tiyaga Rādā* in *Gowlipantu.* Her hands fold up involuntarily and she murmurs:

'Oh Tirupati Venkataramana! Pray, end the screen of misgivings, misery and anger. I have taken up this song in earnest...This mental screen confuses me while doing my *nādopāsana,* wandering over inconsequentials. Pray, help me.'

A solitary gem of a tear glistens at the corner of her lovely left eye even as she struggles to control...)

'The other day "S" sang. It was below average. How people thronged and sat through! People go by names and labels... Thousand empty chairs stare at me like militants out to harm me, my music and endanger my career!...

'Thank God, the time is up...'

— Sings ***Nī nāmarūpamulaku...***

* * *

A good artiste, she is, with a melodious voice and a good training. She came with fervent high hopes not knowing the vagaries of audience-indifference. After a nightmarish concert and thoroughly broken and exhausted, she descends down the steps. What was wrong with her or her music? Unknown urges of rasikas are unfathomable. Was it all *brhmānanda* to sing?

That Rare Applause K.V. Narayanaswami got!

His concert followed the conferment of the title 'Sangita Kala Bhushana' on him by Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar on behalf of Mylai Fine Arts. It was sweet, delightful. "Close your eyes and hear, it would be Ariyakudi; open your eyes and hear, it is K.V. Narayanaswami's." He got applause for each of the songs he sang. But when he forgot the *charana* of the song *Sendamiḻ nāḍennum pōdinīḻē,* the applause was really substantial!'

— Chandilyan

* * *

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VII

ŚRIÑGĀRA IS *BHAKTI* IN DANCE

Balasaraswati Speaks

A

'The traditional order of a bharatanatyam recital in the correct sequence reveals the spiritual through the corporeal:

Alarippu, based on rhythm, brings out the special charm of pure dance, relaxes the dancer's body and mind and prepares her. It is like entering the *gopuram.*

Jatiswaram adds the joy of melody to the pure joy of rhythm. Melody and movement without word or syllable unite us with our being. It is like crossing the *ardhamandapam.*

Śabdam enables expression of myriad moods in the context of compositions - its words and meanings. The dancer is in the *mandapam.*

Varnam gives the dancer expansive scope to revel in music, rhythm and moods with full scope for creativity and self- fulfilment. Dancer is in the holy precincts of the deity.

Padam provides the experience of contentment, the cool and quiet of entering the *sanctum* of a temple. Dancing to a *padam* with its soul-stirring music and *abhinaya* is akin to the juncture when the cascading lights of worship are withdrawn and drum beats die down to the simple and solemn chanting of sacred verses *(mantras)* in the proximity of god...in the inner *sanctum.*

Tillana breaks into movements like the final burning of camphor with a measure of din and bustle.

The dancer takes leave of her subjective consciousness in *alarippu,*
identifies herself with the universal consciousness in *jatiswaram,*
portrays emotions of the lyric in *śabdam,*
enters a living river that holds together movement and interpretation in *varnam* and,
after such ordeal, she qualifies to do *abhinaya* for *pada* where art and beauty bring out moods and emotions.

First, mere metre;
Then, melody and metre;
Then, music, meaning and metre;
Then, music and meaning without metre
Then, melody and finally metre and non-metrical song!

(One sees that) Bharatanatyam is structured like a Great Temple with all its comprehensive completeness and architectural symmetry.

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'This being so, would any wish to take liberties with this sequence', queries Balasaraswati; and she answers, 'One should not. Do not destroy the integrity of aesthetic enjoyment.'

> 'The traditional recital is a rich combination of diverse aesthetic and psychological elements which produce complete enjoyment. Novelties and their razzle-dazzle do not last long.'
>
> 'The Tanjore Quartette - Ponniah, Chinniah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu - propagated this pedagogic and recital pattern. It has been possible for me (a dancer of fifty years standing) to experience the subtleties of *bhava, raga* and *tala* and convey them to connoisseurs. Tanjore style is fully capable of bringing out the lofty and subtle experiences of *Bharata Sastra*...In the highest *Vedanta,* there is no room for temples, idols,,,Yet our religion includes them all...Because someone, somewhere, is able to attain the highest wisdom without the help of temples and idols, are we to discard them as being unrelated to *sastras?* Original concepts of *sastras* are illumined by later-day practices, etc.'

Balasaraswati had some valid advice to parents and young artistes:

> 'To think that *bharatanatyam* can be learnt in a short time is great injustice to art.
>
> 'Parents should not hustle teachers to have *arañgetram.* At least three years of intensive training is a must.
>
> 'Arañgetram is not the end of training. It is only the beginning. Then only substantive phase of training commences.
>
> 'These days, there is too much of praise and too little concern for quality of art. Praise is a seductress. "What is learnt is but a handful ; what has not been is as large as world", parents and young dancers should know.
>
> 'Sabhas provide opportunity only to those with money or prestige. Others are like candles left in pots to get extinguished! Dance is only a hobby to daughters of the elite. Reform of the present state of affairs is *sine quo non.'*

(In this connection, those interested may peruse the pregnant observations of K.V. Ramachandran in the *Journal* of the Music Academy. Among connoisseurs, Ramachandran was in the limited group of elite titans.)

B

Is Bharat really in need of continued dependence and emphasis on *śriñgāra* in the context of its present political turmoils and tribulations? Bharat extended from Afghanistan to Thailand once and has been slowly, steadily and systematically shrinking in size. Even what is left as Bharat is in the throes of uncertainty, lack of faith, dilution of national spirit, etc. The boundaries of India are not safe enough and one is not sure of the percentage of its citizens who

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swear by and stand for *'Jai Hind'*. Does not the need of the hour lie in *Śiva Tāndavam* and such other manly dances, exercises? Is there not an urgent need to **shift emphasis** from *śṛiṅgāra, padams* and *javalis* to manly pieces in music and dance? Are there not other modes to portray *bhakti?* Should art irretrievably be wedded to *nayaka - nayika bhavas? Śṛiṅgāra* may continue, as it will; but shift in emphasis seems to be a vital need. May sane artistes, patriotic conductors and intellectuals ponder over this!

MAHAKAVI BHARTṚHARI
Musical allusions

'Kō na yāti vaśam lōkē mukhē piṇḍēna pūritaḥ I
Mṛdaṅgo mukhalēpēna karoti madhuradhwaniḥ II

(When the face of mṛdaṅgam is anointed (with the special paste called *sōru*) it gives sounds that are sweet. Even so, few could resist submitting themselves to control if their mouths are stuffed with morsel!)

This observation should find place in all codes and manuals!

'Yannāgā madavāribhinnakaratāstiṣṭanti nidrālasā
Dwārē hēmavibhūṣaṇāśca turagā valganti yad darpitaḥ I
Vīṇā Vēṇu Mṛdaṅga śaṅkha paṭahaih suptastu advōtyaṭē
Tatsarvam suraloka dēvasadṛśam dharmasya visphūrijitam II

(... that a person is awakened from slumber by the sounds of vīna, flute, mṛdaṅga, conch and pataha is the result of virtuous deeds.)

— *Nītiśatakam - Pariśiṣṭam 7 & 13*

* * *

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VIII

RANJAYATI ITI RĀGA

'Ranjayati iti Rāga' — That which gives delight is Rāga. While there exist others which do confer delight, there could be nothing so elevating, ennobling and soothing as rāga. Mātanga, the eminent *lakshanakara* and author of *Bṛhaddēśi* in the seventh century A.D., aptly defines—

'Yōsau dhvani viśēṣastu swara varṇa vibhūṣitaḥ
Ranjaka jana cittānām sa ca rāga udāhṛitaḥ.'

(That which is beautiful and decorated by tonal excellence of swaras and varṇas and gives pleasure to the listener is rāga.)

Nothing is sweeter and inspiring, exalted and sublime, fragrant and divine than rāga to any living being and much more so to a human.

Rāga is pure and absolute melody, undefinable in the ultimate but is a *bhāva-rasa* soaked melody-mould, melodious arrangement of musical notes with creative graces and intuitive embellishments to express, convey and instil a positive emotion, feeling and effect. Each rāga enjoys a distinct individuality generating a distinct mood or reaction in the listener. Rāga *(dhātu)* is the soul of Indian music passed on by oral tradition *(karṇa parampara).* It is a harmonious blend, a composite web of sweet notes, pitches, graces and embellishments such as *gamakas,* tempo, timbre, etc. *Sāhitya* (*mātu* or lyric) gives it enhanced, meaningful, structural precision, finesse and finiteness apart from its meaning and message. While rāga enjoys independent entity, *swarūpa* and graces, *sāhitya* divested of raga is mere prose or poetry. It is the coparcenary of *sāhitya* and *sangīta* that confers intelligible optimum pleasure. The charm, beauty and joy hinge upon the homogeneous blend of the voice of the vocalist or the tone of the instrument with the expertise and imaginative grandeur of improvisation, the acoustics of the chamber, the time of rendition as well as the receptive grade, quality and maturity of the rasika (listener).

The *consensus ad idem* of the musician-rasika syndrome qualify and quantify the degree of *lakshana* and *lakshya* and the *sampradāya* (traditional) or *avant garde* content of presentation. *Jana ranjakam* is a *sine quo non* ingredient of music. Aesthetic rendition invokes aesthetic response and emotions. Rāga can sway the emotion of multitudes and is thus the golden link between Man and the Infinite and amongst living beings.

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Indian genius has garnered, identified and codified a large number or rāgas principally to give expression to spiritual and religious urges and secondarily to harness and streamline the emotive forces of humanity. To Indian sages, seers and *vāggēyakāras* (composer–musicians), rāga has been fundamentally the tool of expression of godliness, for *nādōpāsana* and *nāma saṅkīrtana,* apart from social and cultural uses. But for this far-sighted wedding of melody with spiritual endeavours, Indian, more particularly Carnatic, music might not have blossomed into the mighty science and the oldest living art as it is today. Exaltation of soul has been a fertile field for experiments in and enrichment of rāgas.

While the *ārōhana* (ascending notes) and *avarōhana* (descending notes) provide the core, only graces and embellishments like *gamakās, brikās, jārus, sanchāras* and *saṅgatis* reveal the *swarūpa* of a rāga and add to the *tour de force* of Indian music. Improvisation constitutes the blood, flesh and soul of rāgas. Originality in delineation is the essence of rāga, the rendition of which is likened to the flight of Garuda, the sacred bird and its shadow with sparkling glides, crisp swoops, startling dives, unique balancing and countless niceties.

* * *

Indian genius has always revelled and drawn delight in definition, classification and codification and in this, music has received generous treatment as can be seen from what follows:

Mela or *Janaka* rāga : Venkatamakhin devised the Seventy-two Mēlakarta Scheme and Govindacharya refined the scheme. Each of these rāgas has all the seven notes both in the *ārōhana* and the *avarōhana* in the same order of the *swaras* and *swarasthanas* upwards and downwards. All rāgas other than these seventy-two are *janya* (derivative) rāgas.

'The offspring before the parent, analogous to the saying 'the child is the father of man' is a common phenomenon in the history of rāgas. A rāga is spoken of as *janya* only for purposes of classification and it is in no sense indicative of its later birth', says S.R. Janakiraman. He points out how ***Sriraga*** of great antiquity is treated as janya of the later *Kharaharapriya*.

Janya rāga : Each *Janya* rāga is traced to a *Janaka* rāga (sometimes more than one too). These differ from the parent ragā due to *varja, vakra,* etc. aspects: have

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varying number of notes in *ārōhana* and *avarōhana* such as—

Swarāntaram	(four & four notes)
auḍava - auḍava	(five and five notes)
auḍava - shaḍava	(five and six notes)
shāḍava - shāḍava	(six and six notes)
shāḍava - auḍava	(six and five notes)
Sampurṇa	(all seven notes)

Normally a rāga needs a minimum of five notes to provide some in the lower tetrachord and some in the higher with a dominant note *(aṁśa* or *vādi)* in one and a consonant note or *anuvādi* in the other. B.V.K. Sastri states that Mysore Veena Shivaramiah (1888 - 1950) created a new rāga named *Swayambhuswara* with only *shadja, antara gandhara* and *panchama* and composed a *kirtana,* a hindustani cheez, an english band tune and a *mangalam* in that rāga!

Mūrcchana : Any new scale obtained by shifting the keynote *Shadja,* the other notes getting respective placements automatically.

Grāma : The method to obtain new scales by altering the *sruti* value of notes of *Shaḍja Grāma*

Pitch : 'Rāgas are born of scales to create a pleasurable feeling... is musical rendering beautified by sounds of different pitches giving pleasures to the mind of the listener.'—

T.V. Subba Rao in *Rāgas of Saṅgīta Sārāmrita.*

Pitch has a great role in rendering music more musical. Some please the ear in upper octave, some in the middle and some in the lower. Hence *'sthāyi'* is relevant.

Sthayi

Atitāra	— Uppermost
Tāra	— Higher
Madhya	— Middle
Mandara	— Lower
Anumandara	— Lowest

→ Delineation in the *ati-tāra* and *anumandara sthāyis* is feasible only to artistes blessed with felicity of voice and pitch.

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Angas : *Akshiptikā* (āyattam) — Initial part of rendition of song.

Ragavardhini
Vidāri *or*
Eduppu —Take off point

Sthāyi —Melodic phase

Vartini —Creation of *tānas* around varied notes of rāga

Nyāsa (Muktāyi) —Note on which rāga ends.

—Govinda Dikshitar in *Sangita Sudhā.*

Trayōdasa (thirteen) characteristics :

Graha	—	The note on which rāga commences
Amsa	—	The note that reveals the melodic entity of a rāga– called *Jiva Swara.*
Mandara & Tāra	—	The notes beyond which elaboration need not go.
Alpatva	—	The note rarely availed of.
Bahūtva	—	The note frequently availed of.
Apanyāsa *Vinyasa* *Sanyasa*	—	Ending notes of intermediate phases in *rāga ālāpana*

Nyāsa, Audava, Shādava and *Antaramarga* are others.

Bhava/ Rasa : Certain rāgas have inherent quality to induce or connote specific emotions such as

Sahāna rāga — Compassion or benevolence
Atāna rāga — Authority or anger or majesty.
Mukhāri rāga — Sorrow.

Kāla : Time of rendition : Certain rāgas are held more appropriate for rendition during particular parts of day such as:

Pre dawn	:	*Bouli, Bhūpalam, Malayalamārutam, Mālavagoula*
Morning	:	*Bilahari, Hamsadhwani, Kēdāram*
Evening	:	*Shanmukhapriya, Kalyāni, Saranga*
Night	:	*Nilambari, Ānanda Bhairavi, Hamir Kalyani, Yadukula Khambodi.*

The suggested times are more appropriate than others though not for rigid application.

Kriti : A condensed, compact, theme-oriented song with *sahitya* and *sangita* based on a particular raga. Kriti enjoys the appeal of individual *bhavas* or *rasa(s).* Thus a single *kriti* 'can be, for the truly devout, the veritable microcosm of all the infinitudes of Karnataka music'. Normally a kriti has *a pallavi,* an *anupallavi* and one or more *charanas.*

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Invention of rāgas : The *Melakarta* Scheme of 72 rāgas permit of endless permutations and combinations of notes bringing out rāgas which have not been in vogue hitherto. This accounts for the rapid growth in the number of rāgas. Of course, the melody aspect of each is crucial. It is in this context, the facile, popular, major rāgas like *Sankarābharanam, Khamboji, Todi, Kalyāni, Kharaharapriya,* etc. gather their image and stature since such ragas admit of hours of improvisation that is constantly pleasing. Till the early part of the twentieth century, some artistes specialised in particular rāgas and became famous like *Begada* Subramania Ayyar, *Todi* Sitaramier and *Sankarābharanam* Narasier. This specialisation had enabled them even to mortgage their expertise in such particular tunes in monetary transactions.

Tamil *Paṇ* : The Tamils in the peninsular region of India had a highly developed science and art of music. The Rāga system of the North and the *Paṇ* system of the South got coalesced during the long passage of time invisibly and what is called the Carnatic Rāgas hold sway now, as distinct from the Hindustani system of the North - of course, both being rāga and improvisation - based. *Paṇ* is rāga.

History : Music is a fact and way of Indian life. Indian music is unique in that it is rāga or melody-based, improvisation being its sheet-anchor. *Sama Veda* is the fountain-head of Indian music with its pre-historic antiquity. Music has been the handmaid of Hinduism and the arterial flow-line of spiritual endeavours of Hindu saints, seers and *vāggēyakāras.* Music was no preserve of the professional as kings, the elite and the commoner have played notable parts in the long annals of India contributing to the art and science. Music has been elevated to the image of an *Upa Vēda* called *Gāndharva Vēda. Nātya Sāstra* of Bharata (200 B.C. - 200 A.D.) is the earliest extant work. Numerous works have codified the art from time to time such as—

Śilappatikāram of Ilango	—	Fifth Century (Vide Ilango in Part II)
Bṛhaddēśi of Matanga Muni	—	Seventh Century
Saṅgīta Ratnākara of Saṛngadeva	—	Thirteenth Century
Saṅgīta Sudhā of Govinda Dikshitar	—	16/17th Century
Caturdandi Prakāsika of Venkatamakhin	—	c. 1635–1660
Saṅgīta Sārāmrita of Raja Thulaja	—	c. 1635–1736
Saṅgraha Cudamani of Govindacharya	—	18th Century.
Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini of Subbarama Dikshitar	—	1904

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Indian music is a rare legacy. The extinct *gurukulavasa* mode of training was a unique institution. Close liaison with spiritual endeavours enabled smooth and dynamic growth of *bhakti* movements and *nāma saṅkīrtana*. The Indian rāga system is the acme and essence of perfection, well-classified and documented.

'The nectar of ragas presents its votary the beneficient results of *Yaga, Yoga, Tyaga* and *Bhoga'*. 'Oh Mind! Drink it with delight', exhorts Saint Tyagaraja, one of the prime *vāggēyakāras.*

Dichotomy of Sadasiva Bṛhmēndrāḷ:

Sivamānasikapūja is an intellectual elixir, a high philosophic treatise presented in verses with sugar-coated simplicity by Sri Sadāsiva Bṛhmēndrāḷ. Eternal *Vedāntic* truths are scattered in the form of questions posed to Lord Parameśwara Himself. Here are some:

nṛtyam prathatām kathamiva
Nātha tavāgirē mahānatasyēha I

Gītam kim puravairiṅ
gitāgamamūladēsikasya puraḥ II

(O! Lord, how there could be *naṭanam* before You, the greatest (Cosmic) dancer? Why music before the Ādi Guru of *Sama Veda* which is the source of *Sangīta Śastra*?)

Vādyam ḍamarubhṛutastē
Vādayitum vā parēasti kā śaktiḥ I

(Who has got the skills to play an instrument before
You who holds the instrument damaru in hand?)

* * *

Sri Subramanyaya Namaste, Namaste
Subtle *Sahitya*

'Manasija kōṭi kōṭi lāvaṇyāya' , sang Dikshitar. Manasija is Manmatha, God of Love, Cupid. The son of Lord Siva, who destroyed Manmatha, is beautiful like crores of Manmathas! The subtle beauty in sāhitya is highlighted by Sri Mahaswami Chandrasekharendra Saraswati in his talks with Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar.

'Subramanya confers both *bhoga* and *mokṣa* unlike some other gods *(bhoga mokṣapradātre)'*, the saint told him. The musician knew what bhoga meant!

* * *

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IX

PRE-EMINENCE OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CHOLA DESA

Barring exceptions, an artiste is the product of heritage, his times and environment. While Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar positively comes under the exceptions, still he was a robust symbol of the remarkable heritage and culture of Thanjavur.

The Cauvery Delta in Thanjavur has for over a millennium enjoyed pre-eminence in the fields of music, art, architecture, sculpture, scriptural lore and all that goes in the name of culture and its contribution has been *non pareil* compared to the combined glories of many other civilizations. After the Cholas, the Nayak and the Maratha rulers were such enlightened men that they gave principled patronage to music and dance and the period 17th - 19th centuries witnessed cultural renaissance in a measure rarely excelled or even equalled by any elsewhere. Rulers like Raghunatha Naik (c. 1600 - 1630), Shahaji II (1684 - 1712), Tulajaji (1728 - 1736), Sarabhoji II (1798-1832), etc. were exceptionally outstanding not only in patronage but in their own involvement and personal contribution. Their enlightened Courts resembled those of Vikramaditya and Vijayanagar rulers. The immensity of their patronage and contribution to the cultural heritage of the land bore no comparison to the minuscular size of the petty principalities they ruled over. Even when power deserted them, they did not languish like Napoleon but, like Swati Tirunal Maharaja, shone with added glory since the removal of the shackles of power freed them to adopt cultural efflorescence as their own. The heritage they inherited was great. The legacy they left was greater!

Not only the rulers but ministers like Govinda Dikshitar, author of *Sangita Sudha* and Venkatamakhin, author of *Catur Daṇḍi Prakāśika,* have left behind immortal works that are landmarks in the sphere of Carnatic music. Eminent *Bhagavata Mahapuruṣas* like Swami Narayana Tirtha, Sadasiva Brhmendral, Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal, Sadguru Swamigal and Sridhara Venkatesa Arya spread *nāma sañkīrtana* which was faithfully accepted by a grateful nation. Bhajans and *kalakṣepams* flourished and illustrious artistes like Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar drew huge crowds. Dance in all its pristine glory came to be practised with refurbished effulgence adding charm and elegance to the cultural milieu. The Thanjavur Quartette were trail-blazers who had made distinct contribution.

Above all, the Classical Carnatic Trinity (1762-1847) of Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri appeared on the scene and with their multi-faceted

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contribution, not only enriched Classical music but placed Carnatic music on an unassailable and impregnable high pedestal that has few parallels in the annals of music. Nature was bountiful in its benign grace and the period saw a galaxy of eminent, illustrious composers and musicians like Ramaswami Sivan, Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Patnam Subramania Ayyar, Sonti Venkatasubbiah, Sonti Venkataramana, Pallavi Doraiswami Ayyar, Pallavi Gopala Ayyar, Gopala Krishna Bharati and scores of giants, each a cultural monument by himself. There was such a profusion of eminence in galaxy that it would be a life-endeavour to list them out and their contribution. Every village had its *bhagavata,* musician, instrumentalist and its nagaswara artistes of stature. Temples, festivals, social and cultural festivities aided the efflorescence of art in all its transcendent excellence and reverberated with music and dance. The involvement and response of the public - whether it be the *cognoscente* or the lay - were impressive, unique and universal. There was an upsurge of cultural renaissance. Villages like Umayalpuram, Konerirajapuram, Tiruvaduthurai, Maharajapuram and Tiruvidaimarudur achieved a prominent place and inscribed their names on the musical and cultural map of Bharat. Contribution of composers and musicologists was immense and praiseworthy.

A well-deserved tribute to Tamil Nadu is paid by D.N. Visweswariah in *Sangeetham* (USA):

> '...And quite objectively, I feel as a non-Tamilian myself, that this is due to the inherent religious devotion of the Tamilians and to their attachment to traditional arts like music... When I shifted to Madras in 1938 for my livelihood, music became plentiful and easily available. For the occasional vidwan I used to listen to in Bangalore, there was a dozen highly talented, but not as fortunate to be well-known, available in Madras. While I salute the Tamilian for upholding Carnatic Music tradition and creating the rich atmosphere, I feel saddened that this very abundance has led to recognition and rewarding of only a handful of musicians.'
>
> **'Chowdiah, when once praised for his music, said, "Come with me. I'll take you to obscure places in Tamil Nadu where there are vidwans far superior to me - but who do not know wherefrom their next meal is coming..."'**

Thanjavur, Tiruvaiyaru, etc. became pilgrim centres for the musically inclined in the South. Bidaram Krishnappa, Vasudevacharya, Kempe Gowda, Chowdiah and a host of others from Karnataka, Shatkala Govinda Marar, etc. from Kerala, Venkataramana Das, Bobbili Kesavayya and many others from Andhra found it to their benefit to make such pilgrimages. A visit to the Cauvery Delta was taken as a sure path to attain grace and grade. Did not Swami Narayana Tirtha come from Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh? As Tyagaraja's ancestors came from Kurnool district, Syama Sastri's ancestors too had reportedly come from the

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same district. Kṣētrajna came to Thanjavur and composed 1200 *padas.* Such instances are many. The fertile soil, the rejuvenating waters of the Cauvery and the cultured environment that prevailed then made Thanjavur belt enjoy what the combined glories of Rome, Athens and Egypt were not blest with. Thanjavur Court acted as a Parnassus attracting one and all with claims to qualities of head and heart to come, drink deep its culture and return if need be, enlightened and elevated. Geographically, Thanjavur was small but in its artistic affluence it had few peers. That was the Cauvery Delta in which Tyagaraja was born, lived and left his immortal heritage. Syama Sastri was fully content with music and his family deity Devi Kamakshi at Thanjavur. Of course, Dikshitar was the kṣētrajna.

I have referred to the environment of the times above. Many may fully endorse the following factual observations of Dr. V. Raghavan:

> **"If we can picture to ourselves his times and the environment in which Tyagaraja lived, it will not be difficult to understand what he learnt or how he grew into knowledge and how he developed his ideas and character. The *agraharas* were open university towns in which one with ears open gained one's all-round knowledge quite easily. The *Vēda pārayana* and *Vēda ghoṣa,* the teaching and cultivation of sanskrit and the *sastras,* the public expositions *(pravachanas)* of the *Ramayana,* the temples, the festivals, the periodic *sadas,* to all these one gets continuously exposed."**
>
> — By courtesy *Shanmukha*

Soul in Tune

'That any medical purpose may be fully answered by music, I dare not assert; but after food, when the operations of digestion and absorption give so much employment to the vessels, that a temporary state of mental repose must be found, especially in hot climates, essential to health, a few agreeable airs, either heard or played must have all the good effects of sleep and none of its disadvantages; putting the soul in tune, as Milton says...'

— Sir William Jones.

* * *

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X

VOICE OF MELODY CRIES

Sacred Wishes of K.B. Sundarambal Frustrated

A

K.B. Sundarambal was born in 1907 amidst chill penury in a lowly family and had to earn bread not only for herself but for her unfortunate mother in rags. While the girl was denied the charms of a happy family environment and pleasant upbringing, she was endowed with rare musical acumen and melodic expression. Penury had no means of stifling her noble rage. The lass went about vending her folk songs in delectable tunes for a few paisa. Few were averse to part with a small coin in a *quid pro quo* to listening to the speaking voice of the hapless, innocent girl. This went on for some time.

Her mother, Balambal took her daughter in 1917 to Karur and found in R.S. Krishnaswamy Ayyar, Deputy Superintendent of Police, a sympathetic soul who was bewitched by the divine captivating voice of the girl. That was the **first turning point** in the colourful but chequered life of Sundarambal. Ayyar introduced the girl to P.S. Velu Nair, one of the reigning dramatists of the day and Nair was only too glad to admit the girl, whose uninhibited voice traversed the three octaves effortlessly and its vibrant, rich timbre filled and echoed back in theatres in those mikeless decades. Sundarambal's songs were the delight of not only the patrons of dramas but of music-crazy multitudes.

Just as a prince came into the life of Cinderella, the Prince Charming of the Stage, S.G. Kittappa stepped into the life of K.B. Sundarambal. If the milkmaid in the ballad told the boy, 'My face is my fortune', S.G. Kittappa should have thought that this young vendor of melody could with legitimate pride boast, 'My voice is my fortune'. And there came about the Wedding of Melodies in 1927 when brahmin Kittappa took the hand of the sweet-toned street-singer! It was the Age of Melody and the music-crazy populace of Tamil Nadu were fed sumptuously by the couple with delectably rich music, in mysteriously ravishing tones with *bhava-rasa* flowing out in gracious measure captivating and enslaving multitudes. However **this second turn** was not to last long.

Good things have the knack of meeting untimely demise! And S.G. Kittappa died in 1933 leaving the stage, artistes and the people in unconsolable anguish. That was the **third turn** in the fragrant but fragmented life of Sundarambal. The man who gave her status and image had gone. She took to white saree and

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anointed her forehead with *vibhuti* (sacred ash). She reminded one and all of the woman-saints of Bharat. What a glorious life of chastity and rectitude she led! Respect flowed in abundance unsolicited. She left the stage once for all.

Was the ingenuous flame of her enchanting voice to be quenched, stifled and silenced once for all? She was unwilling to sing in the absence of her Prince. But well-meant advice took her not to the dramatic stage but to the concert dais and the film Gopalakrishna Bharati's Nandanar. She earned a lot and hoarded what she earned. She was rich and her personal life answered to the highest demands of Indian Womanhood. And her life ended on September 24, 1980.

Her lyrical expression was crystal clear, facile exuding *bhava* and *rasa.* It was indeed *inter-se* competition between her voice, *sahitya* and *sangita* and none could decide which was better. She was a devotee of Lord Muruga. The Government clothed itself with glory by nominating her as a Member, Legislative Council in 1958. From Nallathangal, her first drama at Karur to the film, Nandanar, she had taken the people of Tamil Nadu with her lilting enchanting music to dizzy heights of appreciation and sublime levels of joy. Eight films including Nandanar and Avvayar were chosen delights of the people. Her discs on *Jnānapaḷattaip piḷindu, Thanittirundu vāḷum* and *Vennīr aṇindadenna* are songs which bring out the soul and solace of music even today. They have therepeutic merits indeed! That has been the impressionable saga of one of the illustrious daughters of the land, of rags to riches, of the elevation of a street-singer to an exalted member of the society and of music itself.

B

Sundarambal earned sumptuous wealth but had no intent to fritter or squander it away. She had noble urges, laudable intents and praise-worthy causes in view. She was not obliged to any save that official at Karur and the Prince charming of Dramas and to Lord Muruga in whom she had intense faith. What she earned from the public should serve the society well canalised, she dreamt of. The dream came true when, in document no. 6880 of 1975 dated September 22, 1975, she executed a Deed of Family Settlement and Public Trust for Charitable and Religious Purposes and created the—

"Smt. K.B. Sundarambal Charities".

The Trust took **immediate life** and **came into operation** forthwith with herself as the Founder-Sole Trustee for life as candidly averred by her in the document:

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> 'The settler *hereby* settles, conveys...the schedule properties...to the First Trustee'.

The Trust was thus a *fait accompli:* it was no paper tiger, no half-hearted endeavour. Sundarambal stipulated that after her death, there shall be a Board of Trustees to administer it.

Was the creation of the Trust a freak, impulsive act?

No, it was not. It was a conscious, deliberate, well-intentioned, absolutely lawful and perfectly legal act. She substantiated and confirmed the same in her will dated April 4, 1976, which was opened after her death as document no.23 of 1980. She refers to the Trust created by her in UNEQUIVOCAL terms and further builds it up averring:

> 'All my properties shall vest absolutely in the Trust already created by me in my name and the Trustees of the Trust shall be the Executors.'

The document was duly opened by a government officer following the procedure.

C

Sundarambal died but her noble deeds did not, even as her music could not. But the deeds witnessed a 'living death'! A relative obtained a succession certificate presumably suppressing the documents setting at naught the sacred wishes of a great and devout lady. The High Court order would seem to be based on possible evidence which should have suffered from *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* as it bristles with inaccuracies such as:

i. '...deceased K.B. Sundarambal, was unmarried...' This is contrary to a well-publicised fact, proved by her own conduct. Surely she had not spurned the stage and took to white saree and sacred ash for the death of anyone else. How injustice is caused to the sacred conduct, character, action, sacrifice and memory of a great lady!

ii. "...died intestate..." How judicially and factually incorrect it is! Two documents validly executed have been presumably screened from the eye of law.

iii. "...Publication has been dispensed with..." Was there need for such hurry and undue haste?

iv. "No objection has been received..." The Puranic Savitri got the boon for a child when her husband lay dead. When the boon was granted she asked the God of Death, Yama how she could beget a child without her spouse. Yama was startled when he realised the gravity of his granting the boon. And Savitri got her Satyavan! Here, when no notice had been published, how could any objection be received? How unfortunate the situation is! Can K.B. Sundarambal come to life and cry like a modern Kannagi from the portals of the Court—

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'I am KBS;
I created a public trust for charities;
There is a Deed of Trust and a Will to vouch for it, etc.?'

Succession certificate was got and it is feared that a part of the wealth had been alienated. The Trust stands stifled; charities remain on paper; the soul of the good Lady of Kodumudi is left without solace; her sacred wishes are left to the winds! The Voice of Melody cries! There is little meaning in indulging, nor is there time to indulge, in hair-splitting arguments in the context of the sacred wishes of the lady and the spirit of the endowment.

These facts were made available during my enquiries for the Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers & Musicians. The issue was placed before the Government with copies of the documents, etc. in July 1993. On August 27, 1993, I was informed that a report had been called for. On February 6, 1996, I have been informed that —

'The matter is under the consideration of the Government in consultation with the Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Administration Department.'

The Mystery of Genius

'We must all recognise that ultimately all great artistic productions are works of genius. You cannot produce a Tyagaraja by turning the handle of a gramaphone. That is a task that is yet beyond human power. Genius transcends explanation. Until we solve the mystery of genius we cannot solve the mystery of music because one is the creation of the other.'

* * *

Undoubted Masters : The Maha and Sastri

'For many years, the art of music and the exponents of music had to take a back seat in the social scale...No respectable man or woman would think of devoting himself/herself to music. Fortunately things were a little better in South India. Perhaps it was due to the selfless love of their great exponents like Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar and Sarabha Sastri, men of transparent greatness, who in spite of depressing surroundings, held their heads high and made their art not only loved and admired but also honoured!

—Sir C.V. Raman at the
Music Academy, Madras (1933)

This has been the universal view of all men of standing and wisdom like Subramanya Bharati. The lives of the two titans have been detailed in the *Garlands*.

* * * * *

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PART II-A

NĀDA TARANGINI

"The Cauvery flows westwards!"
'Impossible; it's all fiction.'
"Believe it or not, it's a fact!!"

TURN OVER AND READ ON.

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THE CAUVERY FLOWS WESTWARDS!

The Fiction

The Cauvery flows with conscious pride on its chartered course eastwards majestically. Swirling waters run to the brim saturated with pure red-ferruginous alluvia carried with understanding to impregnate and rejuvenate the cultured soil afresh with fertility. Sparkling foamy flakes in diverse shapes radiate and glitter in multi colours charged by the penetrating rays of an effulgent morning sun shining unhindered by unmusical fickle clouds and scintillate like gem-studded ornaments that would baffle even the most talented professional jeweller; nay, would be his eternal dismay!

Perceiving her spouse standing on the adjacent flight of steps for males and completing his morning prayers, the young lady rushes through her ablutions and emerges out adjusting with rustic grace her wet, hand-spun saree in crimson. She pilots her fair, myrtle-dyed feet with measured steps with intent to join her spouse on the bank just on time as if both of them were to be yoked there at *samakāla* (simultaneously). Her wheat-complexioned, tall, lean husband joins her squeezing his wet clothes, his face brimming with unexplained muffled smile to match the brimful flow in the river. She smiles too but knows not why - smiling in vacance even as her lovely eyes fondly sweep through his entire frame from head to foot in chaste admiration. The couple linger on for a while on the bank unwilling to tear themselves away from the river they love and respect.

Tyagaraja (1767-1847), yes, it is the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru in-the-making, suddenly whispers:

> 'Kamalamba dear, I experienced a peculiar thrill while in the river and saw a queer picture of Rajeswari!'
>
> 'What is it, dear', whispers the well-chiselled idol in classical mould shining in her well-bathed beauty. (Beauty is never endearingly beautiful than after a bath in a river.)
>
> 'I saw Rajeswari (the Cauvery) flowing westwards in the reverse direction!...'
>
> (Kamalamba chuckles in all her rustic innocence with coquettish nṛtya.)

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'Good girl, don't be foolish. I know gradient and gravity will not allow the Cauvery to flow from Poompuhar to Mercara... But there should be something in it. Yes something grand, lofty, magnificent and significent in that sudden feeling and perception...'

'I see your perceptions now distinctly, dear. With your intellectual prowess, you are, perhaps, destined to play a vital role and this sudden feeling is but to remind you of your mission. Sister Parvati (Tyagaraja's first wife) often used to confide, "Do not take this soft-spoken brahmin for an ordinary person. Some mysterious force guides his pure soul".

(Kamalamba's eyes full of *śāntam* and *mañgalam* glide over his frame with loving grace and prayers born of tradition and adoration. Indian women, how self-effacing and understanding have they been!)

MYSORE TAKES OVER CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Quite strangely and quite in accord with the dream-like fiction just described, Mysore was then gearing up to take over the role which Vijayanagar and Thanjavur had earlier played with historic distinction. Of course, there was no Vidyaranya or a Govinda Dikshitar but to match the gifts of Serfoji II of Thanjavur, his counterpart Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1794 - 1868) with his deep and scholarly interests was at the helm at Mysore. He was a musicologist too. And there ensued a succession of enlightened rulers like Chamaraja Wodeyar (1868 - 1894), a violinist himself, Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1894 - 1940), a connoisseur and patron and Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (1919 - 1974), scholar, connoisseur and composer. Slowly and steadily Mysore and its satellites Rudrapatnam, etc. came to cradle, nurture and play a magnificent role to patronise and popularise music and other arts. The Court became a bee-hive of activity and the slogan in the South was *'Mysore chalo'* to sing before the royalty and obtain approbation. It was not restricted to music but extended to Vedas and scriptural lore too. *'Samastāna Sanmānam'* was the goal of every pundit and musician. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar came and he was received with great cordiality. Patnam Subramania Ayyar came. Syama Sastri was invited but he could not come. Many others came and earned recognition and approbation at the Court. How the caravan of vidwans was long and continuous and how it even became difficult to get audience are illustrated in the lives of many vidwans. Peria Vaithi and Chinna Vaithi from Radhamangalam near Sivaganga, for instance, could not get admission; they disguised themselves as beggars and sang intricate *pallavis* when the Maharaja

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approached to worship the Big Nandi. The ruler was intrigued and getting at the truth, gave them audience and honoured them. There had been similar anecdotes, which indicate the intense desire to exhibit talents at the Court. Sonti Venkataramaniah's advent at Mysore and his captivating concert before Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar are beautifully described by Mysore Vasudevacharya. The ruler made him a Court Vidwan, honoured him with *kanakābhiṣēkam* and maintained him in comfort.

The Mysore Court was adorned by illustrious stalwarts and there came on the scene distinguished vidwans like Veena Seshanna (whom K. Srikantiah describes as, 'What Bradman was to cricket, Seshanna was to veena; veena and Seshanna were synonymous and he lived a *nādayogi* like a colossus'), Bakshi Subbanna, the elegant and extravagantly generous vainika, Mysore Vasudevacharya, the complete musician-composer of renown, Bidaram Krishnappa, a colossus who demonstrated the efficacy of the dictum 'Will to succeed', the ocean of a guru Venkatagiriappa and the maestro whose mere presence lent grace and lustre to the concert stage, Mysore T. Chowdiah. There was Chittoor Sadasiva Rao who found Mysore the haven of musicians and composers. There is Titte Krishna Ayyangar of Tillaistanam *Parampara* and a galaxy from Rudrapatnam with a Sangita Kalanidhi in R.K.Srikantan of Wallajahpet *Parampara.* The list is endless. Mysore excelled and delighted particularly in vainikas. All great artistes had visited Mysore.

(Of course, Mysore is willingly legating her role and stature to its affluent, vibrant and glamorous younger collateral, Bangalore in recent decades which has infra structure, corporate presence to aid and promote institutions.)

The One-man University of Tyagaraja churned out and released successive melodic waves of disciples of eminence and missionary zeal. We shall deal with one branch of the *Śiṣya Parampara,* viz., the Wallajahpet line of disciples to highlight how the compositions of Tyagaraja and the glorious traditions of musical Thanjavur spread fast to Mysore belt in the upper reaches of the Cauvery, taking as it were a reverse course. Was it a *quid pro quo* for the H_2O which came down the gracious river copiously **then?**

We shall briefly tarry at Tiruvaiyaru to take a full view of the life of Tyagaraja, its luminous splendour and radiant grandeur, then pay a visit to Wallajahpet wherefrom Venkataramana Bhagavatar, as the legend goes, brought the picture of Kodanda Rama which allegedly inspired the juicy song *Nanu pālimpa (Mohanam)* before trekking towards Mysore belt along the Cauveri.

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SAINT TYAGARAJA
Fragrant Gold of Carnatic Music
(May 4, 1767 — January 7, 1847)

His Life:

'It is indeed a miracle', wrote B.C. Deva, 'that all the three greatest composers were not only contemporaries but were born in the same Tiruvarur, in houses separated by a lane or two. Besides being musicians of extraordinary calibre, they were all *yogis* and mystics.' (The plan of Tiruvarur in *Yet Another Garland* may be seen.) Grandson of Giriraja Bṛhman, a sanskrit poet and son of Rama Bṛhman of the Thanjavur Court and Santamma or Sitamma, Tyagaraja was born at Tiruvarur and named after the presiding deity there. What a great name it is and how it has become a household name after the advent of that child!

(There was a version that he was born at Tiruvaiyaru itself in 1759. The name of the child itself lends corroboration to Tiruvarur providing the cradle. Subbarama Dikshitar gives the age of Tyagaraja as 77 while the Tyagaraja-devotee, Panju Bhagavatar mentions it as 88. Venkata Suri had noted the dates of the birth of his guru, Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar and of Tyagaraja on a cadjan leaf. It has been accepted as correct by scholars viewed against the age of Syama Sastri, etc., Thanjavur Rama Rao, another disciple, had also left a note of the date May 4, 1767).

Giriraja Bṛhman hailed from Kakarla village, Cumbum taluk, Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh. (There had been some mistaken identity of the grandfather as he was erroneously identified with Giriraja Kavi of the Tanjore Court. Dr.S. Sita had dealt with this error in detail in her *Tanjore as a Seat of Music.*) The family shifted to Tiruvaiyaru and lived in a house in Tirumanjana Veedhi assigned by the ruler of Thanjavur. Tyagaraja studied at the Sanskrit College there and learnt *Vēdas, Sastras, Upaniṣads,* etc., as recorded by himself in kriti *Atukārādani balka (Manoranjani) - Vēda Śāstrōpaniṣad vidudaina nijadārini.* Well-versed in sanskrit and telugu, he learnt music under Sonti Venkatasubbiah and Sonti Venkataramana. Was blest with *Rama Ṣaḍakṣari mantra upadesa* by Swami Ramakrishnananda, on whom there is a verse in *Nauka Caritram* of the bard.

His first composition is *Namō Namō Rāghavāya Aniśam (Desiya Todi)* in sanskrit. It is said that he studied *kāvya, alankāra* and *nātaka* under Govinda Dikshitar. He secured the musical works *Sangita Ratnākara* and *Nāradīyam* from his maternal grandfather, Kalahasti Ayya and studied them. He was presented with the work *Swarārnava* by Sage Narada and he has paid his

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respects to the renowned Sage of Melody - though they do not hint upon the presentation - in his songs:

Nāradamuni Vedalina	*(Pantuvarali)*
Nārada Guruswami	*(Darbar)*
Sri Nārada Nāda Sarasiruha	*(Kanada)* and
Varanārada	*(Vijayasri)*

He married Parvati at the age of eighteen and on her demise after five years, married her sister Kamalambal or Kanakammal. His only daughter, Sitalakshmi had a son, Tyagaraja named after the grandfather but he died at the age of thirty issueless. In 1905, T.A.C. Singaracharyulu wrote that Panchapakesayya, a grandson of Tyagaraja and disciple of Manambuchavadi Venkatasubba Ayyar, was a great musician but died at the age of twenty-two and that he would have been a master in the art had he lived longer. Probably the grandson had been called by different names - one as per *nāmakaraṇa* and the other by usage.

There are recorded versions of two concerts given by Tyagaraja while young as distinct from his regular bhajans. One, at the age of twenty-five before a distinguished audience of vidwans and his guru, Sonti Venkatasubbiah and it was perhaps remarkable for the fact that the guru described his disciple as a vast flower-garden and himself as but a leaf therein. *Jānakiramaṇa (Suddhasīmantini)* and *Dorakuna Ituvanti Sēva (Bilahari)* were among his compositions he sang. The second concert was before Sonti Venkatasubbiah at Thanjavur in the presence of vidwans, when he made an elaborate *raga alapana* in *Khambodi* and sang his piece *Maṛi maṛi ninnē.* The audience were in rapturous ecstasies - a delightful dip in the Ocean of *Gānarasa!*

As Suddhananda Bharati beautifully summarised the life,

> 'Tyagaraja's father was Rama Bṛhman; his book was the immortal epic, *Valmiki Ramayana;* his *mantra* was Rama; his God was Rama; and his life was a stream of Rama Consciousness....He was Mira in emotion, a Kabir in devotion, a Purandara Dasa in music and a Nammalwar in vision.'

He completed *Rama-nama japa* ten million times twice and had Vision of Rama. The under-mentioned songs were reportedly sung on such occasions:

Ēla Nī Dayarādu parāku jēsē	*(Atāna)*
Kanugontini Śrīrāmuni nēdu	*(Bilahari)*
Nādasudha rasambilanu	*(Ārabhi)*

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Upacharamu Jēsē *(Bhairavi)*
Dorakuna ituvaṇṭi sēva *(Bilahari)*

Perhaps the last song only would seem to have specific relevance to the occurrence and occasion of Divine Vision.

He had installed his *Ishta Devata,* Rama in his warm bosom and found no need to stir out of Tiruvaiyaru on pilgrimage except the journey to Tirupati-Madras (Tiruvotriyur), Kovur and Kanchipuram besides Lalgudi and Nagapattinam. (He had his opposite in his contemporary Muthuswami Dikshitar who had Bharat Darsan and perhaps had left few pilgrim centres unvisited.) The visit to Kanchipuram was to meet the venerable Upaniṣad Bṛhman. The visits occasioned the compositions:

Tiruvotriyur Pancharatnam : *Kovur Pancharatnam*
Lalgudi Pancharatnam : Songs on Lord Venkateswara,etc.,

His Philosophy:

The *summum bonum, Nidhi Chala Sukhama (Kalyani)* is the sheet-anchor of his activity, outlook on life and philosophy:

> 'Oh my mind, Tell me truly, which conduces greatly to happiness, Wealth or the vision of the Lord?'
>
> 'Which gives more happiness - flattery of mere men bound up in their conceit or singing of the Lord?'

He set his face against *narastuti* - praise of men for gain. He lived a life of absolute simplicity, in devotion and prayer; allegedly refused the invitation of the Thanjavur ruler to visit him; withstood the pressures and protests of his agnates to avail of material benefits and suffered the consequent lack of cordiality. The great bard, who had drunk deep the essence of scriptures, knew that matter would perish with matter and was interested only in 'expounding the imponderable values, the eternal and the everlasting Source of Life, the "One" which is variously grasped by seers and which is the God of Religion, the Absolute of Philosophy and the Truth, Beauty and Good of art. poetry and mysticism'. He also knew that honours and presents from mortals would retard the progress of his mission and destined march towards his goal. He was fully aware of man's potential for avariciousness once he becomes a victim to matter and also knew moral stories like the proverbial donkey running after the carrot fastened to a stick stretching from its own harness and dangling before it. He

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had adopted Sri Rama who discarded an empire to uphold Truth as his *Ista Devata*. And he knew how Bharata viewed acceptance of that empire as sin and rejected it with contempt. No wonder poet Kambar hailed him that a thousand Ramas could not equal him - *'Āyiram Rāmar nin kēḷāvarō!'* Tyagaraja cut asunder desires before they could take roots. Perhaps the love of agnates, etc., was in inverse proportion to the growth of his fame, name and popularity among musicians, scholars and intellectuals. Indian tradition by deliberate intent wove glory around the art and the contributions of the artiste and rarely on his personal life and prosperity. The composer or the musician received rich dividends of eternal praise and respect but it rarely touched the fringe of his economic well-being.

> "Indigence among artistes was the rule and fact of life. Nay, indigence was cultivated, practised and respected in India...It was the genius and marvel of the Indian that by giving the spiritual capsule and cover to the normal fact of life, he adroitly took away the sting of economic distress. Abject poverty was the basic warranty for the artiste's absolute devotion and contribution to Art, Religion and Society." (*A Garland*)

In the case of Tyagaraja, this approach stood fortified by mandatory compulsions of a philosophy and code of conduct deliberately adopted and consciously asserted! He was rich in the Empire of Rama Consciousness - *Rāma Bhakti Sāmrājyamu (Suddha Bangala)* and revelled there. His dharma was the unique code laid down by ancient sages and seers of India - the same again reinforced by his younger contemporary Muthuswami Dikshitar in his song—

> *'Hiraṇmayīm Lakṣmīm Sada Bhajāmi*
> *Hīna Mānavāśrayam Ṭyajāmi'.*
>
> (I shall seek Goddess Lakshmi who is Herself all gold;
> I shun the reproachful thing viz., the seeking of man.)

Tyagaraja's mission and endeavours were circumscribed by the one and only consideration of singing the praise of the Lord, extol *dharma,* propagate *nādōpāsana* and preach righteousness through his priceless gems of songs of undying prosodic and musical excellence. Pomp of power and glitter of wealth did not lure him (Had he succumbed to the alleged call of the ruler or the pressures of his brother, will anybody celebrate his *jayanti* or *ārādhana?* In the vast pages of Indian history, who are those mentioned with respect and praise still? That they are men like Valmiki, Vyasa, Tiruvalluvar, Asoka, Buddha, Sankara, Manu Neethi Chola, Gandhi, etc., does justify the firm commitment of the Bard. Surrender, service and sacrifice and not *bhoga* that confer eternity.

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His Humanity:

Like a doting child to its mother and the suckling calf to the cow, Tyagaraja runs to his Ishta Devata to report, clarify, argue, justify, explain, appeal, beg, cringe, weep, protest or get angry with. He does not desist from hurling charges, invectives, innuendoes like a *vipralabda nayika.* Having quarrelled and scolded Rama, like a *virahotkanthita nayika,* he repents. The true poet and dramatist in him brings forth diverse emotions aided by his keen intellect, his penetrating observation and his rich accumulated experience and knowledge for the salvation of humanity with ease and grace. He drew no material comfort from his weighty output which stand legated to posterity. He has shown the path and the method to the scholar, the *bhāgavatā,* devotee and common folks. A trail-blazer, he has shown how classical, traditional theory and practice of music — *nādopāsana* and *nāma sankīrtana* — could elevate humanity.

His *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* and *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu* draw up an impressive list of illustrious authorities and categories of men to be revered and saluted. When Gopala Krishna Bharati composes *Sabhāpatiku Vēru Deivam (Abhogi),* he goes into raptures. When Tirubhuvanam Swaminatha Ayyar wins him over with his winsome singing in puppet show, the bard runs to him and relinquishes his right to sing in the delectable raga *Ananda Bhairavi.* When Nagaswaram Dasari delineates *Suddha Saveri* captivatingly, the composer runs into the street to meet him. When Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, his disciple, carries a picture of the Coronation of Rama and presents it, he is thrilled and the song *Nanupālimpa* flows out in the ecstasy. He obliges his disciples Lalgudi Rama Ayyar and Tiruvotriyur Vina Kuppayyar with visits to their places - rare visits for him indeed. There was no question of food and comforts for the disciples when the guru himself allegedly lived on *uncchavrtti.* And yet how had they swarmed around him with unshakable *bhakti!* That itself is sufficient to understand his immaculate conduct and remarkable eminence and prestige he was crowned with.

Legends:

Legends are a natural, nay, a vital corollary of eminence. In his ambition to laud and extol, one fabricates, with good intentions, to promote and raise his idol of worship to greater heights. And Tyagaraja could not escape from this malady though facts do get submerged or corrupted amidst the maze of legends.

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'For some of these stories, enthusiasts seek the songs themselves as support (though) the texts of these songs **do not support** such stories!', says Dr. V. Raghavan, He cites:

i. *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu (Sri raga)* is said to have been composed when Shatkala Govinda Marar called on Tyagaraja. The song is an omnibus obeisance paid to all blessed souls, sages, etc. (The song could have been **sung** on the occasion but **not composed** perhaps.)

ii. 'The song *Nidhi chāla (Kalyani)* affirms his *vairāgya* aversion to material gains and his prizing Rama's presence over all else. It is not necessary to suppose that King Serfoji invited him and Tyagaraja gave this song in reply.'

(Tanjore is just twelve kilometres well connected by communications, culture and all else. Serfoji did encourage music and musicians. Perhaps the bard had **sung** this song to reiterate his *vairagya.* Of course, there is no reference to the alleged invitation though the song gives pairs of alternatives to humanity to choose from:

Wealth	or	*Sannidhi of Sri Rama;*
Curd, butter, milk	or	*dhyana and bhajan on Rama;*
Bath in a well	or	Ganga *sñana;*
Praise of man	or	*praise of the Lord.*

Saint, seer, the devout may agree heart and soul with those alternatives which Tyagaraja had in view; but the uninitiated, the worldly and most of modern humanity may regret with profound sorrow and copious excuses that they are in such hapless position as not to opt for those which the bard recommends. Crocodile tears may deluge and rivers of tears may be in spate in consequence! It is not also far-fetched to suggest that there was perhaps an invitation but that it was not accepted.)

iii. 'For the Tirupati song *Teradīyaka rāda (Gaulipantu),* they tell a story that on his arrival, the priest drew the curtain before the Lord bringing forth the song. The song is on the curtain of *mada* and *mātsarya,* arrogance and intolerance which obscure the bard's vision of the Lord!' (Such a story is told in case of Dikshitar also! Perhaps innocent indulgences.)

iv. *'Munduvenuka (Darbar)* has nothing to do with robbers attempting to waylay Tyagaraja and Rama and Lakshmana guarding him.'

(Presumably, the *harikathākāras* had spun out such stories to engage the attention of the thousands of men and women with the songs for music to whip up their faith in religion! And they have the privilege too! Exaggeration and sugar-coated stories and songs are prime devices to convey spiritual or other dogmas, perhaps.)

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The glamour and eminence of Tyagaraja were such that many known and unknown (perhaps as dedication or otherwise) have composed and presented many songs bearing the signature of the bard like:

Vinatāsuta (Harikhambodi) *Nidu charaṇamule (Simhendramadhyamam)* *Naṭajana paripala (do.)*	Attributed to: K.V. Srinivasa Ayyangar Brothers
Parāmukhamelara (Surati) *Abhimānamennada (Vivardini)*	Mannargudi Rajagopala Ayyar
Dinēsudinamu (Latangi)	Girisa Ayyar
Vedalenu Kodanḍapani (Todi)	Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar

The Glory of his Compositions:

His compositions are prodigious. The staggering range of ragas and the clever melodic manipulation of same ragas differently for different kritis are without a parallel. The *sahitya* is simple, often colloquial and felicitous. The songs provide ample scope for manodharmic delineation of ragas, use of graces like *sangatis, brikas* and *gamakas.* There is freshness even after they have been sung for over hundred and fifty years in every place and mode. There is *bhakti, dharma,* lessons on theory and practice of music and the essence of scriptures in capsules. There is serenity and *sṛiṅgāra* as in *Nauka Caritramu.* The moralist in him constantly comes into focus in many of his songs. He hates pseudo-practitioners in every field. He walks all through his life on the royal high road *(raja marga)* laid by seers and sages he adores. His respect for the great men of the nation is unique and deep. His contentment reflected by his life and songs like *Śāntamu lēka, Soukhyamu lēdu (Sāma)* is remarkable - especially so, for one wedded to *uncchavrtti!* His *vedantic* absolutism did not make him deviate from doing his poojas and *karmas.* He did not presumably believe in kite-flying *vedantic* precepts shorn of *karma yoga.* He is an amalgam of *bhakti, karma* and *jnāna yogas.* The *bhakti* or supreme serenity in him co-existed with subtle satire and humour. His love of *Ishta-Devata,* Sri Rama, does not preclude his equal faith and worship of other deities.

His incredible adherence to laya and shifting the beginning of kritis vis-a-vis the tala *(afita, anāgata, graha* and *samakāla eduppus)* are special graces unique to his compositions. He has invoked all the main musical structures and forms. His *Gānapanchakam/Pancharatna* kritis have become world-famous. For *Nindastuti* - ostensibly accusatory but basically praise-worthy - one can cite his *Adigi sukhamu levvara (Madhyamāvati)* couched in elegant lyric. There is no

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overloaded verbiage. He captures the beauty and *swarūpas* of ragas from varying angles with photogenic skill. He has composed *Utsava Sampradāya kīrtanas* and *Divyanāma Sankīrtanas* for *bhajans* and festivals.

Of his three musical plays, called operas, *Sitārāma Vijayam* is not available now.

> 'There is evidence to show that it was published in Madras in 1868 by Loka Narayana Sastrulu, a disciple of Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar but not a single copy of it is traceable...The earliest edition of *Nauka Charitramu* was printed in 1870 by Vavilla Ramaswamy followed by others...Tyagaraja was influenced by Ananda Tanaya's *Nauka Nirupana* as his *padyam Lokānugraha Kariyai* follows the former's sloka *Naukānagraha karana.*' — T.S. Parthasarathy

Prahlāda Charitramu and *Nauka Charitramu* are unique in excellence. The saintly poet-composer revels in *sṛiṅgāra* along with gopis and Krishna but within accepted norms. In these two dramas, he is in the august company of Jaya Deva *(Gīta Govinda),* Narayana Tirtha *(Krishna Lila Tarangini),* Melattur Venkatarama Bhagavatar *(Prahlāda Charitramu),* Arunachala Kavirayar *(Rama Nātakam)* and Gopala Krishna Bharati *(Nandanar). Prahlāda Charitramu* in five Acts has 45 kritis in 28 ragas and 132 verses while *Nauka Charitramu* is one-Act play with 21 songs, 24 *kanda padyas,* 5 *sisa padyas,* 3 *utpālāmalas,* 7 *sardulas,* etc., In the song *Varanarada (Vijayasri),* he adopts the adjective *'bhāvuka'* for himself, meaning that he is a musician who thrills and steals others' hearts! Could any one accuse him of egoism?

A master of perfection, he had a full revision of his songs with his disciples on his return from Kanchipuram. He wanted to ensure that the holy river Cauvery carries eternally nothing but the most rejuvenating and unpolluted sacred waters charged with his chaste, authenticated rendering. Like Purandaradasa, he cared for 'methods'. A.M.C. Mudaliar says that he 'excluded zealously pupils with a tendency to improvise variations, etc., to guard the purity of his authentic creations'. For this, Tyagaraja had the best of a secretariat, public contacts and publicity wing in the form of a devoted band of disciples of eminence imbued with missionary zeal - a rare but precious asset.

> "Tyagaraja has composed songs in such a manner as to give scope to the singer to bring out the essence in ragas in a pleasing and satisfying manner giving abundant scope for *manodharma.* Though he composed 26 songs in *Todi,* 20 in *Kalyani,* 14 in *Kamavardhini,* 12 in *Varali,* etc., one does not feel staleness but feels invigorating freshness in each. Tyagaraja spoke to the common man and woman and couched his music and message in easy melody and rhythm. The extent of the hold of his music can be gauged from the fact that his songs in telugu

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superseded almost everyone else's in an area where the language was not known."

— Sangita Kalanidhi G.N. Balasubramaniam

Apurva ragas:

'Tyagaraja has employed over 225 ragas and more than a hundred of these appear to be his own creation in the sense that his kritis are the earliest in them...Subbarama Dikshitar, in his *Prathama Abhyāsa Pustakamu* (1905) avers that Tyagaraja belonged to Venkatamakhi tradition as his guru, Sonti Venkatasubayya was disciple of Muddu Venkatamakhi, great grandson of Venkatamakhi. It is clear, however, that Tyagaraja followed Govindacharya'a scheme of *sampurṇa melas* and his nomenclature of *janya ragas* with some exceptions...In adopting *apūrva* ragas, Tyagaraja's test appears to have been the symmetry of the raga and its aesthetic appeal. ...Certain ragas handled by him like *Gundakriya, Bindumalini* and *Malayamarutam* are not found in *Sangita Chudamani.'*

— T.S. Parthasarathy

Excellence: Tributes:

He was master of musicology and gives practical lessons through his songs. Here are some tributes:

"Every *kirtana* is a beautiful temple in which the great composer has installed the God of his heart for worship by those who sing and those who hear."

— Chakravarti Rajagopalachari.

"It may sound surprising that even familiar ragas like *Kharaharapriya, Harikambhoji* and *Devagandhari* are his gifts. His magic touch could translate any scale into a raga."

— T.V. Subba Rao

"His songs cover every aspect of the art, musical criticism, elucidation of musical concepts, the best way to practise music and above all, music as a *yoga* and a *ṣiddhi* - a path and a realisation."

"In sheer volume of output, he essays in the direction of Purandaradasa and Kṣētrajna; in devotion, religious fervour, reformatory zeal and spiritual realisation, his songs approach those of Purandaradasa ; when we think of him singing to his Rama in anguish, we find in him a second Ramadasa of Bhadrachala; in his lyrical moods he takes a page off Kṣetrajna ; in his *Pancharatnas* and some of his heavier compositions, he treads the path of the earlier *prabandha-karas* and later *varṇa-karas;* in turning out pieces now and then in the language of Gods, he seems to beckon his contemporary Dikshitar; when he sings of Mother Tripurasundari, it appears as if Syama Sastri of Tanjore was sojourning at Tiruvotriyur; and he could sustain himself through the task of a dramatic composition like Narayana Tirtha or Merattur Venkatarama Bhagavatar and pay his homage to a *sampradaya* sanctified by Jeyadeva."

— Dr. V. Raghavan

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"Sri Tyagabrahmam was a *bhāgavata sikhāmani,* an *avātara mahāpurusha* born to propagate *bhaktì sampradaya,* a *nāda yogi, ātmajnāni, dirghadarsi,* ascetic and a *vāggēyakāra* who can condense in a *kirtan* or even in a *charana* the essence of an *upaniṣad.* Hence his songs have come to be hailed as ***Tyagopaniṣad.*** His songs excel in *navarasas.* In spite of possessing exemplary qualities of head and heart, Tyagaraja wedded to *vairagya,* indigence and supreme self-respect never bent before any except God and godly men, continued his *jivayātra* and attained salvation."

— T.S. Parthasarathy

T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar hails Tyagaraja' as a *Mādurya vāggēyakara* and says:

'Two prominent traits in his character are his *bhakti* to Rama and worship of *Nāda* as divine...His was a *sagunopāsana...* In *Sobillu Sapta Swara (Jaganmohini),* he extols the beauty of the *sapta swaras.* In *Nāda tanum aniśam (Chittaranjani),* he declares, adopting the invocation stanza in *Sangita Ratnakara,* that the *sapta swaras* constitute the body of Lord Śiva.'

'Persons who listened to the kritis of Tyagaraja for their *bhakti* content came to acquire a knowledge of ragas. Likewise, musicians came gradually to acquire *bhakti.* The value of the contribution of Tyagaraja and his contemporaries to classical music cannot be over-estimated.'

'Another remarkable contribution of Tyagaraja is improvisation known as *sangatis.* He adopted the method of varying the melodies with the same sahitya. It is the richness of *raga bhava* that gives him a place among the greatest of the composers of art music...'

'There is *madurya* in the music of Tyagaraja,
in the *sahitya* of Tyagaraja and
in the *bhakti* of Tyagaraja. He is *par excellence* the *mādurya vāggēyakāra* of Carnatic music.'

Sangati, to adopt a practice in military parlance, is scouting, exploration roaming out unguided - all subject to the criteria that the scouts do not cross the line of demarcation of duty and return to the base-camp. See the delta map that adorns the *Garlands.* All branches of River Cauvery are *sangatis* of the mother river (*kriti* or raga) in effect but they are not *sangatis* as understood in music since the branches do not ultimately merge back in the parent river! Parents are happy that their unmarried girls go out to concerts, dances, lectures, etc but they expect them back at dusk. If they go out and come back safe and sure, they can be compared to *sangatis.* It they do not, they may even be victims of some other *'gati'* - unknown happening!

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Disciples:

Tyagaraja had numerous disciples. The word 'disciple' is too stale a word to be used in respect of his prime śiṣyas. The Bard was divine *avatar* to them and they were his apostles, Ekalavyas and Arjunās. He was *paramātma* to those *Jivātmas.* Their passion to stick on and serve him is proverbial. The guru goes daily on his rounds for alms - never soliciting but singing fervently on God - not for some ounces of grain to him but for their acceptance of pounds of his *bhakti.* The small vessel did hang on his slender shoulders to receive alms (rice) but it lent no weight even if it were full since the frail body was fully saturated and soaked in devotion to the Universal one. (I have seen women at the threshold of cleanly swept and washed frontage of their houses with rice, waiting for a venerable one to come near, prostrate before him, empty the vesselful rice and receive back his benediction in the shape of three or four grains! The benediction was so real and genuine that perhaps the vessel had no space in it for more than three or four grains! If this was true early in this century, how magnificent it should have been in the centuries past!) The disciples enjoyed *gurukulavasa* but could they have had any scope to partake of food when the guru was an ascetic addicted to *uncchavritti* himself? And yet, they crowded around him and were at his beck and call. That is the awe-inspiring marvel, sweet fragrance and excellence of the *guru-śiṣya* nexus.

The prime disciples included Sundara Bhagavatar and Krishna Bhagavatar of Umayalpuram (which *parampara* in its turn has been churning out musicians), Rama Ayyangar of Tillaistanam and Venkataramana Bhagavatar and Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar of Wallajahpet. If the songs of the Bard became popular in his life-time, the credit goes to those ambassadors of melody. Kanniah Bhagavatar went to Travancore, the land of *sopana* music ruled over by Maharajah Swati Tirunal, to spread the music of Tyagaraja. Like Viswamitra seeking approbation and assent from Vasiṣtha to his asceticism, Swati Tirunal reportedly sent his compositions to Tyagaraja through Shatkala Govinda Marar whose visit became memorable. Tyagaraja, it is said, was impressed with the songs of the ruler and sent a reply. It was reported to be available at the Royal Archives, Trivandrum (*Srimad Tyagaraja Vijaya Kavya* of L. Muthiah Bhagavatar - 1941). It is reportedly not there now!

Well equipped and trained, the disciples sang his songs like Lava and Kusa at different places. Tiruvaiyaru being close to the cultural capital of the South became prominent with visitors streaming in to pay respects to Tyagaraja and carry back evergreen heartwarming memories (Toomu Narasimha Dasa of Guntur, Gopinath Bhattacharya of Benares, Govinda Marar from Trivandrum, to

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mention a few). The poet's *bhajans* were great attractions and it was at one of the bhajans in 1843, Govinda Marar sang and *Endaro Mahanubhavulu* was sung in reciprocation. While the disciples must have filled their physical hunger elsewhere, they had their intellectual, spiritual and melodic hunger and aspirations fully satisfied and graduated at the feet of Tyagaraja, who shed love and musical wisdom on them.

> 'His disciples were many and lucky too. It was their enormous fortune to enjoy this experience of *kirtana pratikshyam* all the time. It should have been a divine experience. The world owes much to Tyagaraja's disciples for their excellent work.'
>
> — N.M.N.

This captive university was unavailable to Muthuswami Dikshitar as he was mostly on a musical pilgrimage (*Bharat darṣan*), to Syama Sastri wedded to the temple of Sri Kamakshi Devi, Thanjavur and to Swati Tirunal since he was a ruler who could not sit down to teach or even do *bhajan* though Rani Mira had the guts to break the chains in distant past in Rajastan.

Taittriyopaniṣad has a prayer:

" आमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणस्स्वाहा । विमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणस्स्वाहा ।
प्रमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणस्स्वाहा । दमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणस्स्वाहा ।
शमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणस्स्वाहा । यशो जेनऽसानि स्वाहा ।
श्रेयान् वस्यसोऽसानि स्वाहा । तं त्वा भग प्रविशानि स्वाहा ।
समा भग प्रविश स्वाहा । तस्मिन् सहस्रशाखे । निभगाहं त्वयि
मृजे स्वाहा । यथापः प्रवता यन्ति । यथा मासा अहर्जरम् ।
एवं मां ब्रह्मचारिणः । धातरायन्तु सर्वतस्स्वाहा ।
प्रतिवेशोऽसि प्रमा भाहि प्रमापद्यस्व ॥"

(Section 4)

"May many students come to me—
with varied interests,
with intelligence,
with sense-control, and
with mind-control.
May I be well-known (as a teacher) among the people.
May students come to me from all directions even as
waters rush down and months rush towards the next year."

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This found its echo at the homes of many musical souls under *gurukulavasa.* They were not, by any standard, rich; but their hearts were large! The teacher verified the ancestry, aptitudes and attitudes and admitted them as students, whom they treated as their children and the students looked upon the teacher and his spouse as parents! This was the profound reason and wisdom behind the precept that 'He who imparts learning with solicitude is also a father'. Episodes abound in exalting this nexus in the interest of advancing learning, prosperity of arts and the health of the nation.

Gurukulavasa is dead but a few homes receive trainees at various stages of learning music as part-time, day scholars who step in and out (like out-patients at hospitals). This is however vital since music colleges and universities have not been able to bring forth many prominent artistes notwithstanding their stature, facilities and men and material equipment. Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar had said that Umayalpuram Venkatarama Ayyar and Ammapettai Kannuswami Pillai taught him pallavi in *Simhanandana* tala at their homes at short sessions when he went to them and the latter doing it standing!

K.N.Srinivasan, musicologist, lists out the following as disciples of Tyagaraja:

Umayalpuram Krishna Bhagavatar and Sundara Bhagavatar.
Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar and Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar.
Tillaisthanam Rama Ayyangar and Srinivasa Ayyangar.
Manambuchavadi Venkatasubba Ayyar, guru to a galaxy later.
Tiruvotriyur Veena Kuppayyar, father of Tyagayyar.
Tanjore Rama Rao, very senior in age and constant companion.
Subbaraya Sastrigal, son of Syama Sastrigal of the Trinity.
Govinda Sivan and Sabhapati Sivan,
Ayya Bhagavatar, Neikarapatti Subbier,
Nemam Subramania Ayyar, Nangavaram Nilakanta Ayyar,
Lalgudi Rama Ayyar, Kanniah Bhagavatar who went to Kerala,
Tyagarajan, Bard's grandson who died prematurely,
Bikshandarkoil Subbarayar, Amrtalingam Pillai,
Ganesa Ayyangaru, Sojri Sitarama Ayyar,
Wallajahpettai Kuppier and Souriya Venkatachala Bhagavatar.

The legacy has been carried on in increasing measure by the disciples. Consequently, the *'Tyagaraja Sisya Parampara'* is as vast and ever bulging in the field of music as scions of Risi Bharadwaj *(Gotra)* - like a great river branching off into rivulets, channels, etc. What is the reason? The source or origin was fragrant gold which shed its perfumed grace and benediction and had let down rejuvenating, captivating and soul-filling musical waters rich in *sahitya* and conjuring in raga styles and embellishments. One feels proud now

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to claim that he belongs to that illustrious *parampara.* May we respectfully salute the immortal Patriarch!

Fragrant Gold:

'If gold could be found with fragrance, it is Tyagaraja, Kṣetrajna, Purandaradasa or Jayadeva', remarked Dr.V. Raghavan. It is true and apt. Can anyone visualise a normal concert during the last several decades without the songs of Tyagaraja? His influence was so pervasive and commanding that it actually gave occasion once for avoidable protests on grounds other than the merits of his lyric, music, etc., The verdant beauty of lyrics, the intuitive conception and inspired creativity, the glittering imagination, enthralling treatment of issues and their lavish emotional appeal, the wide spectrum of ragas with graces, techniques and embellishments embedded in each, these and many more find subtle place in his songs. *Rāgaratnamālikachē (Ritigaula)* exhorts:

"Come one and all!
Sing the hundreds of gem-like melodies blended into a garland *(rāga ratna māla!)* by Tyagaraja for the salvation of humanity
Sing these songs containing the essence of *Vedas,* six *Sastras, Puranas* and *Agamas.*
Yogis attained *brhmānandam* by doing so.
Bhāgavatās sing these in congregations.
Tyagaraja has composed these in the firm belief that **this Garland of songs** will secure bliss.
Let us follow and sing the **Garland of songs** got up in a hundred gem-like ragas."

It is an open invitation; he led and sang. Who could hesitate to follow? The response was immediate and massive, The entire panorama of melody was studded with, nay, monopolised by kritis and kirtanas of the Bard. His interest in the salvation of everyone is impressive and his call is to humanity as a whole! Is there any corroboration to this claim? Here it is in *Manavini Vinumā Maṛava Samayamā (Jayanārayani):*

'I have entertained only such thoughts
Which would do good to others.'

Sarvē Janah Sukhino Bhavantu - Universal salvation and joy - is the cornerstone of his musical endeavours. When he consistently addresses, 'Oh, Mind', it is the Universal mind, the minds of everyone on this planet.

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Here is another: *(Daya jūchuṭa kidi vēḷara* in *raga Gānavāridhi):*

'Munu nīvānaticchina
Panulāsakoni ne
Manasāraga nidānamuga
Salpinānu vara Tyagarājāpta nanu.'
(With love, sincerity, devotion and method, I have carried out the tasks entrusted to me by you before).

This is the Project Completion Report in truth! Then what? Does he seek or pray for any boon? The advaitic saint-poet has no need for it. The apparent dualism in his songs is but the professed uneasiness of the *jeevātma* to join the *Paramātma.* He could not be unaware of the *quid pro quo* between the two *ātmans,* which has been beautifully set out by Appar, the Apostle of Siva (6/7th century):

'Nin kaḍan adiyēnaiyum tāngudal
En kaḍan paṇi seidu kiḍappade'.
(Thy duty is to ensure my welfare too;
Mine is to do my duty and rest content!)

The beauty of this *inter-se* division of labour between the *ātmans,* it will be appreciated, lies in the predominance of the duty of the Lord to care for the subject and ensure its salvation. Aware of scriptural truths, Tyagaraja just throws out a hint with grace that it is the proper time for the Lord to cast his eyes on him! *(Daya jūchuṭa kidi vēḷara).*

His mission is done; the time for the melodic soul to become part of the Universal Soul is drawing near. Tyagaraja enters on *Āpatsanyāsa* - renunciation and merges in the Lord. The Puṣya Bahula Panchami day, 24th Margasirṣa, Parabava - January 6, 1847 is a great red-letter day in the annals of the cultural endeavours of Bharat. In conformity with the tamil adage, the minuscule banyan seed germinated at Tiruvarur and grew into a colossal tree at Tiruvaiyaru to scatter melody and provide musical shelter to kings, chariotry, infantry and cavalry - *Teḷḷia ālin śirupaḷattoruvidai...niḷalagummē.* His *ārādhana* is celebrated as a national festival at Tiruvaiyaru and at scores of other centres from USA to Australia. Tyagaraja's advent helped to raise the stature of musicians and *bhagavatas* and lent stability and image to Classical Carnatic music through his *'swara rāga laya sudhā rasa kaṇḍa chakkara'.*

The Choreographer:

The eminence of Tyagaraja as a choreographer, designer/guide *(naṭṭuvanar)* needs special mention. He was thorough with *Natya Sastra* and had assimilated

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it (TSP). His songs are perfect hunting ground for *nayaka-nayaki* and *nayika bhavas.* A perfect dancer can revel in portraying countless variations in *abhinaya* with his—

'Inta soukhyamani nē jeppajāla
Entō ēmō evariki delusuno...Sankaruniki delusunu' *(Kapi)*

'Nāti māta marachitivo, O Rama' *(Devakriya)*
(Dancers were presenting natya in your Court;
I was lost, entranced in the worship of Thy Sacred Feet;
You stopped Bharata from waving the flywhisk to enable me to have full *pāda sēvanam...)*

Rama Daivamā, Rāga Rāga Lōpamā *(Surati)*
(Why this miserliness; why this deceitfulness...)

Nowka Charitramu will be a remarkable success as a ballet.

* * *

The list is long. Fascinating dramatic effects, sudden thrusts, dynamic shifts in emotions, *bhava-rasa* highlights have won him supreme acclaim as a *vāggēyakāra* of eternal multi-dimensional relevance.

Nādalōludai Brhmānanda: Tyagaraja speaks:

Gods and great saints attained the highest bliss - *Brhmānanda* - by losing themselves in *Nāda.* Sankara, Narayana and Brhma attained their distinctive eminence only through *nādopāsana;* it transcends the Vedas and they revel in *swara, raga* and *laya - Nādōpāsanachē (Begada).* Tyagaraja, in *Vidulaku (Mayamalava Gowla),* pays obeisance to the celestials, sages and seers who have assimilated the secrets and essence of the *Saptaswaras.* In *Sitavara Sangīta (Devagandhari),* he observes that Brhma should bless each life with *sangīta jnāna* since one who does not feel the ineffable bliss of Brhman, viz., *sangitajnana,* is but a burden to earth *(Ānanda Sāgara - Garudadhwani).* Realisation of the inner graces of *Nāda* with *bhakti* elevates one to Swarga and confers salvation; and he adds in *Swararāga sudha (Sankarābharanam)* that it provides one with brhmananda which is but *moksa.* His song *Ragasudharasa (Andolika)* clarifies that the nectar of ragas confers the benefits of *yāga, yōga, tyāga* and *mokṣa..*

Tyagaraja, in his several songs, echoes the essence of *Upaniṣads* such as:

Chandogya Upaniṣad: *'Udgitha* or *Omkara* is the final essence of essences. The worship of music is good.'

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Taittṛiyopaniṣad: 'Bhṛgu understood that *Ānanda* is *Brhman.*' This absolute *ānanda (bṛhmānanda)* is different from *ānandamaya,* which is experiential, gradational and time-bound, while *ānanda* is pure, enjoys *pūrṇatvam* and suffers no constraints like *ānanda maya.*

It is this supreme, absolute *brhmānanda* that Tyagaraja refers to when he advocates *nādayoga* to the good souls of this planet. Sadāsiva Brhmendral and other seers have extolled music as the safe tool. Apostle Appar praises God in the same strain as *'Ezhisaiyai, Isai payanāi' - Nāda* comprising the *saptaswaras* is God and the result of such music is God. Our ancients' love of music has been such that they could think of nothing else more sacred or as a sure tool to attain and enjoy the Ultimate Bliss! *Nāda rūpiṇyai namaḥ; Rāga swarupāyai namaḥ; Bhāva rāga tālāyai namaḥ.)*

There was ample opportunity for him to witness dramas (theru-koothus), bommalattams (puppet-shows), etc., since every festival entailed the presentation of such features. (In fact, in my village of Mandhai, transplantation of paddy shall not take place without enacting a drama on Krishna, Rama or Harischandra.) And Tyagaraja had spent his life in the cultural citadels, Tiruvarur and Tiruvaiyaru and no wonder his vibrant dramatic instincts and innate talents got whipped up in the mental recesses his imagination since an orthodox brahmin of his stature could not normally take on roles on the stage. He was nattuvanar at heart. Whatever his imagination brought forth on the impressionable canvas of his ever-green mind, his poetic genius captured the soul and spirit of the scene and embedded it with grace and embellishments in his songs. It was this dramatic urge that drove him into the arms of Tirubhuvanam Swaminatha Ayyar, the puppet-show expert. His unsullied *bhakti* revelled in the *mānasika* Ocean of Drama and Dance.

His stand on *Adwaita:*

Based on the song *Dwaitamu Sukhama, Adwaitamu Sukhama (Ritigula),* it has been suggested that Tyagaraja was assailed by doubts and that he was wavering. This is not correct. Known for clarity, the master-teacher, excelling in didactic thrust, brings out in some cases the alternatives to focus for deep analysis. For example, when he presents four pairs of alternatives in *Nidhi Chala Sukhama,* could anyone attribute vacillation to him? Further, the chronological progress of the composer in such matters has also to be taken into account. In the song *Tatva Meruga Daramā (Garudadhwani),* he affirms that it is difficult (for the lay?) to realise the truth *Tatvamasi* (That Thou Art). He

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carries out a self-appraisal in *Siggumāli Nāvaledhara (Kedaragaula)* saying that 'I have not realised in my heart that Thou art myself' while *Paramātmudu Veligē (Vagadhiswari)* is a clear enunciation of *adwaita.* In *Intakannānandamēmi (Bilahari),* he records, 'It is sufficient that I forget the senses and realise that He is All *(Soham)* while in *Nikēdayarāka (Nilambari),* **he asserts that there is no salvation even to saints if they are wedded to dualism!** It is a dramatic poser in *Dwaitamu Sukhamā* or the song pertains to his earlier formative years. His stand is however clear.

A fundamental point to be noted in respect of the compositions of Tyagaraja is that he has an unsatiable penchant for driving home his views with queries. If all these are to be collected, it would constituate a big book by itself. Did not Rama himself ask Sita:

> "...Do you think I could hope to silence, him?
> He will pester me with questions galore!
> What an array of never-ending questions he releases!
> He has the make-up to be the best prosecuting advocate
> in a country criminal court that was ever produced..."

(A fiction in *Another Garland* - Page 83)

It should not be construed that he was assailed by doubts. It is pure poetic rhetoric for emphasis, poetic grace for embellishment.

Inspiration:

Dr.V. Raghavan writes that Tyagaraja was indebted to Annamacharya and his descendents for many of his own ideas and expressions apart from the ideology of music as part of the worship of God, that he derived as much from Purandaradasa as from Kṣetrajna, that Bhadrachala Ramadasa furnished from the banks of the Godavari to the Rama bhakta on the banks of the Cauvery the proto-type and that Tyagaraja has echoes from the songs of Swami Narayana Tirtha. The impressionable mind of Tyagaraja drew much from the doctrine of Upaniṣad Brhman of Kanchipuram expounded in his *Upēya-nāma-vivēka.*

Reference is solicited to the following also:

'Wealth or Devotion - Relevance of Tyagaraja's poser to modern society'	—	*'A Garland'*	Pages XL-XLIV.
'Let Us Skip Tiruvaiyaru - A Farce'	—	*'Another Garland'*	78-84
'Women in Tyagaraja's Compositions,	—	*'Yet Another Garland'*	22-25

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'Tyagaraja v. Collaterals'	—	"	29-32
'When the Cauvery became the Yamuna, Nowka Charitramu was born'	—	"	51-55
'Ensemble of Eminence - The Carnatic Music Trinity'	—	"	56-59
'Sadguru Tyagabrhma Ārādhana - History and Novelty'	—	"	76-79
'Let Us Skip Tiruvaiyaru, 1994'	—	"	80-84
Tyagaraja - saint or poet	—	*'The Fragrant Garland'*	Part-I

WALLAJAHPET VENKATARAMANA BHAGAVATAR (1781 - 1874)

Among the numerous *śiṣya paramparas* released by the 'One-Man University' of Tiruvaiyaru, the Wallajahpet line is among the more important. Venkataramana Bhagavatar hailed from Ayyampettai near Thanjavur but later lived at Wallajahpet near Kanchipuram. Tyagaraja was actually just fourteen years senior to Venkataramana Bhagavatar and yet what a prodigious *guru bhakti* he elicited voluntarily! Here is an extract from *'A Garland'* (1990):

> 'Venkataramana Bhagavatar had his tutelage under Tyagaraja for twenty-six long years! It was not a case of any extended training but an active association of master-pupil ensemble. Bhagavatar believed in the dictum that release from bondage of the soil is no freedom to the tree (to quote the charming words of Rabindranath Tagore). The tree went on drawing copious rejuvenating energy from the soil; and the soil, in its turn, enjoyed the salubrious shade and durability provided by the tree. The disciple enjoyed the compositions of the master and his rendition - *kirtanapratikṣhyam;* and the master found in the disciple a spiritual passion for music and knowledge. The tree was so devoted to the soil that it drew its offshoot (son), Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar (b. 1824) too to its fold. The father and the son functioned like a personal computerised secretariat to Tyagaraja and kept the vast repertoire free from interpolations. They have left a legacy of their master's songs which go by the name of Wallajahpet *Pātam.*
>
> 'Tyagaraja had, perhaps, received only one presentation and it was only from his disciple! It was only a picture of Kodanda Rama painted by Pallavi Ellayar, which is still at Tiruvaiyaru. Venkataramana walked from Wallajahpet to Tiruvaiyaru, a hundred and fifty years back with the picture. The master was thrilled and the captivating song *Nanu Pālimpa* in the enchanting tune *Mohanam* was then rendered by Tyagaraja:
>
> "O! Lord of my life! Have You come walking all the way to bless me knowing fully the unexpressed longing in my heart - to have a vision of Thy lotus face - which is the sole purpose of my life."

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What Suka was to Vyasa, Venkataramana was to Tyagaraja. He and his son enabled the bard to recheck all the songs on the latter's return from Kanchipuram to ensure authenticity.

One Ramaswami Bhagavatar had in 1868 brought out the telugu publication *Harināma Saṅkīrtanalu* comprising *Aswamālikastavamu, Rajagopala Dwadaśamu, Aṣṭottara Śata Slokamulu, Mangalaṣṭakamu* and 75 *Hari bhajana kritis.* Bhagavatar's matchless *guru bhakti* is reflected in his *Gurustavam,* in kriti *Guru Charanam Bhajarē, Hē Mānasa (Sankarabharanam)* and *Guruvaru Mahimala (Ananda Bhairavi).* Sri Venkataramana Bhagavata Swamigal Jayanti Committee, Ayyampettai had brought out in 1971 fifty-four songs of Bhagavatar with notation in tamil. Prof. P. Sambamurti had stated, 'It is due to his inquisitiveness that we are in possession of some parts of *Swararnava* and the full texts of the operas of Tyagaraja. A scholar in sanskrit and telugu, he became endeared to his guru'.

Venkataramana Bhagavatar also composed *dhyana ślokas* (prayer songs). *Neevu Nannu Brova (Darbar)* is his kriti.

What was the quality of the guru's affection towards Bhagavatar? He gave him his priceless icons of Kodanda Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Anjaneya along with his tambur and *paduka* (sandals). The disciple inherited intact the priceless and sacred legacy of his guru! They are now with the Sourashtra Sabha, Madurai. He, as also his son separately, had kept brief accounts of the life of Tyagaraja which have been reproduced by T.S. Parthasarathy in his book, *Sri Tyagarajaswamy Kirtanas.* Both are the saint's Boswels.

The father and son were vocalists. Presumably they were among the group who sang *Endaro Mahanubhavulu* at the time of the visit of Shatkala Govinda Marar, musician-emissary of Swati Tirunal Maharaja.

Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar helped and taught A.M. Chinnaswamy Mudaliar of Madras Secretariat in publishing the *'Oriental Music in European Notation',* a pioneering, landmark endeavour in 1893. He was a composer and his son, Ramaswamy Bhagavatar had published the book *Tyāga Brhmōpaniṣad.*

Pray, let us imagine Venkataramana Bhagavatar journeying on foot from Wallajahpet to Tiruvaiyaru in those distant times with the picture in hand. He must have found fault with his *chouka kala* (slow pace) and tried to whip it up into *madhyama kala* and *durita kala* in his anxiety to satisfy and surprise his master earlier. He should have constantly conjured up the tantalising vision of Tyagaraja being surprised by the unexpected gift of the most desirable one close to his heart and the attendant pervading *brhmānanda* on his saintly face shedding *sāntam, soukhyam* and *śivam.* (I feel that Tyagaraja must have

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reacted and exhibited his delight in just the same manner as that, one used to see in the Paramacharya of Kanchi who attained *purṇatvam* in 1994 - calm, graceful, eyes shedding *karuṇa* and the lips curving into an inimitable smile!)

Place of Birth	:	Ayyampettai (Ramachandrapuram)
Date of Birth	:	February 18, 1781
Connection with Wallajahpet	:	The ruler of Karvetinagar wanted to learn music from Venkataramana Bhagavatar, who had to shift from Ayyampettai to Wallajahpettai in 1834. A house was purchased and gifted to him there by admirers.
Preliminary musical training under	:	Nannuswami Bhagavatar, his father. Grandfather Kuppayya Bhagavatar of Ariyalur was also a musician. Later he became attached to Tyagaraja for twenty-six years.
Disciples of Bhagavatar	:	Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Sathur Fiddle Kuppuswami Ayyar Mahakavi Venkatasuri Swamigal Tiruvotriyur Ramaswami Ayyar Bangalore Munuswamappa, etc.,

An interesting incident in the impressionable lives of Guru Tyagaraja and Śisya Venkataramana is narrated. The opera *Nowka Charitra* drew protests from envious elements on grounds of its over-emphasis of *śṛiṅgāra* aspects. The complaint that it would demoralise youth was taken to the notice of the Thanjavur ruler, who sought for the authority or source material for the work. Alas, there was none since it was almost the sweet poetic fancy and exhuberance of Tyagaraja that had brought it out. Venkataramana Bhagavatar told his guru that he had a sanskrit opera which clearly could qualify to be the source. He had earlier written up a sanskrit version of Tyagaraja's opera inspired by its conception and beauty. When it was brought out from the family shelves at Ayyampettai and shown to the ruler, he was immensely pleased resulting in the jealous elements beating a hasty retreat. The *ipse dixit* paid off! An innocent translation laid off long back came in handy.

Out of about 2500 compositions, only 150 are available. His songs reflect unlimited bhakti, prosodic graces and melodic finesse. His signature (mudra) is Ramachandrapura vara Venkataramana Bhagavatar.

Here is another anecdote - real or legendary - recounted by P.K. Srinivasan in *Shanmukha:*

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'Tyagaraja in his *Tulasi Shatkam...Tulasi dhalamulachē (Māyāmālavagaula)* assumes special significane because of an incident. Wallajahpet Venkataramana used to bring tulasi and flowers from his village, Ayyampettai for the pooja of his guru crossing the river Cauvery. Once when Tyagaraja was performing *archana* with them, to the surprise of all, whatever flower or tulasi he used for each, it got transformed into the specific flower that was mentioned in the *charanam* of the song like *sarasiruhā, punnāga, champaka, pātala,* etc.; Tyagaraja repeated the song and again, the same miracle occurred. The saint concluded that the special significance should relate to the *bhakti* of the individual who garnered and brought the flowers. He blessed Venkataramana and (allegedly) sang *Jnānamosagaradha* (now in *Pūrvikalyani* but then in *Ṣadvidamārgini*) to grant *jnana* to the disciple.'

* * * * *

MYSORE SADASIVA RAO

(c. 1826 – 1906 or 1800 – 1880)

'Paradoxical though it may seem, it is unfortunately true that very often scanty is our knowledge about our own great people...This is so because these great figures never troubled themselves to record their personal achievements in life, for their aim was only the advancement of art. Sri Sadasiva Rao who by his exceptional musical talents had earned much name and fame for Mysore was no exception to this.'

— Mysore Vasudevacharya

Sadasiva Rao came of a rich and noble family but little is known of his ancestry except that—

he was a smarta desāstha maharashtrian,
he was born at Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh who went over to Mysore at the age of about thirty and lived there for five decades till his demise,
he was a disciple of Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar,
he was present when Venkataramana Bhagavatar arranged *'patna pravesam'* for Tyagaraja during the latter's visit to Kanchi
and he composed the *Todi* raga song *Tyagarajaswami vedalina* on the occasion and that
he was a prolific composer.

Disciple Bakshi Veena Subbanna had a manuscript copy of 200 compositions of Sadasiva Rao with him. He kept a full account of *tanavarnas, padavarnas, kirtanas, tillanas and swarajatis.* Sadasiva Rao has composed delightful kirtanas full of *bhava* and *bhakti* like—

Kanugoni (Kalyani)	on Sri Kamakshi, Kanchipuram
Paramātbhutamaina (Khamas)	on Sri Ranganatha, Srirangam
Sri Parthasarathē (Bhairavi)	on the Lord of Triplicane
Vāchāmagōcharundani (Atana)	

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and about 36 others mentioned by Dr. V. Raghavan in the book *'Mysore Sri Sadasiva Rao Kritis'*. Some of the songs are mentioned in *Gayakalochanam* of Tachur Singaracharlu Brothers in *Bhagawad Bhajana Paddathi* of Triplicane Kodandarama Ayyar, Prof. P. Sambamurti's *Indian Songs,* etc. The Music Academy published sixteen items in 1947.

Vasudevacharya describes Sadasiva Rao's style as *narikēḷapāka* - sweet and nourishing but with a hard cover (shell). He hails him as *Gandharvāmsa Samboota.* Sadasiva Bhagadheya and a few others are his *mudras.* His songs are devotional with raga and *sahitya bhavas.* 'It was at about the time of his visit to Kanchi that Patnam Subramanya Ayyar was conferred the title Begada Subramanya Ayyar', says Vasudevacharya. In his *Tyagabṛhmopaniṣad,* Venkataramana Bhagavatar's grandson Ramaswamy Bhagavatar mentions that Rao received the blessings of Tyagaraja who was pleased with his composition *Tyagarajaswamy Vedalina.* A very devout Nṛsimha bhakta, he lived a simple life personally. Among his many disciples, Vainika Sikhamani Veena Seshanna. Vainika Pravina Veena Subbanna and Bettadapuram Subbannah were important. Vasudevacharya describes him as one with good personality, keen on religious observances, kind to everyone with fanatic faith in feeding others. He spent his entire wealth on *atithi satkara* feeding not less than fifty daily at home each with a meal. The Prince of Charity was reduced to the status of a Kuchela and there was no Krishna to succour. He accepted the post of asthana vidwan at Mysore Court on Rs.30/- per mensem. He died after a life of musical and social utility full of grace and respect.

Mysore Vasudevacharya recounts an incident which touches on the melodic and spiritual life of Sadasiva Rao. The occasion was Ramotsava and Rao was giving his concert to a packed house. A rasika requested him to sing his composition *Nṛsimhudu (Kamalamanohari).* Rao explained that he used to sing that song only in his puja room and that too after observing fast. The innocent rasika could not appreciate the depth of Rao's qualms and persisted with folded hands. Believing *jana sēva* as *Janardana sēva,* Rao was singing the song. After pallavi and *anupallavi,* he was on the sahitya *Śanakādulu Viśmālimpa* when the framed picture of Sri Nrisimha came down from the wall and crashed into pieces to the consternation of all. The great musician was in tears and the audience was in shock. How does the world take it?

Sangita Kalabhivardini Sabha, Mysore brought out a publication of forty-seven compositions of Sadasiva Rao in 1954. Out of the hundreds of his

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compositions, many had been lost. It is mentioned that Rao, while young, ran away from home, that he was for some time a clerk in the Collector's Office, Chittoor and was married into a well-to-do family. Nothing specific and not even a picture of the great composer is available. Incidents referring to the magnanimity of Rao are many. As his life was about to end, he composed the song *Kamalakānta Sri Krishnānanda (Vasanta).*

In the book cited in the last paragraph, the names of Sadasiva Rao's parents are given as Ganesa Rao and Krishna Bai. A monthly grant was given by Mysore Court to Rao and his successors.

1. *Kṛpālaya Sri Gurumadvarāya*
   Nṛpottamāgraṇi Satya Vijayapuravibhu Śri Tirumalarājapāla *(Todi)*

2. *Namāmi Satyavijayaswāmi Gurō*
   Sakala Śiṣya Kalpataṟō *(Danyasi)*
   . . . .
   Sri Tirumalanṛpakarārchitadāngrē Hēma kāṣayadara

3. *Paramādwaitamaina nīsēva nēdu Dōrakenuga nē Dhanyudaiti* *(Khamas)*

These and other songs are to be intensively examined to churn out biographical touches, etc. therein.

* * * * *

BAKSHI SUBBANNA - FRAGRANT VEENA VIDWAN: (1855 - 1938)

Subbanna, a contemporary of Seshanna and disciple of Mysore Sadasiva Rao, adorned the Mysore Durbar galaxy of musicians. 'He was a more substantial and serious-minded exponent of the veena. But he was an introvert lacking in push and enterprise, though he enjoyed the respect and esteem of the better-informed', wrote R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar.

Mysore Vasudevacharya writes that Subbanna's generosity was extravagant. He was born rich and lived like a benevolent, cultured prince.

> 'A Gandharva elegant in taste and always cheerful. He was quite frugal in eating while luxurious dishes were all reserved for his guests! Smartly dressed, he was extremely fond of flowers and scents. When he moved out, his approach would be announced a furlong ahead by the fragrance wafted across by breeze!'

Gopalakrishna Bharati left his remuneration with his patrons as deposits and, though wretchedly poor himself, issued cheques on palmyrah leaves to

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those in need to take such deposits from the patron-banks. Subbanna, in his last days in distress, would likewise give a note to those in need to withdraw even his stipend from the Durbar Bakshi! Surely he was a modern Karna! How? Vasudevacharya confirms:

> 'Even when his fortune dwindled away and life became hard, Subbanna continued to be generous. One of his dependents had been promised financial assistance for a marriage in his house. Subbanna had none left with him. He called his wife Namagiriyamma to hand over the gold belt *(oddiyānam)* she was wearing. The gracious wife swiftly complied with it.'

If Karna parted with his life-saving breast-plate, Subbanna couple parted with the gold belt that was left with them! The ambrosial aspect of this episode lies in that the honourable couple were made for each other and their lives exemplify the concept of *Ardhanariswara* each half finding rhythm in the other. When Vasudevacharya dedicated his kirtana *Rājeevalochana Rama (Mohanam)* to Subbanna who brought him up, the noble Kannadiga gave vent to a gospel truth:

> 'Acharya! It is my misfortune that I am listening to this *kirtana* when my hands are empty. It is good in a way, I should say. If creative art is to blossom forth into a lovely flower, may be, the artist should go hungry.'

"This man is freed from servile bonds
Of hope to rise or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all." — Sir Henry Wotton

Chamaraja Wodeyar, the ruler of Mysore, used to take Vasudevacharya and Subbanna to camps. Once the two vidwans were allotted a small, inconvenient tent by officials and their protests went unheeded. Taking it as a challenge, Vasudeva gave a thick coat of sandal paste on Subbanna's forehead and covering themselves with shawls both met the ruler pretending to be ill. To the royal query, Vasudeva replied that damp conditions in the tent had led to their illness and 'caused concern not so much for themselves but for their musical instruments!' Immediate royal concern and solicitude were revealed in their being provided with fresh tent, cots and other comforts. Once in the Nilgiris, Subbanna fell very sick. The Maharaja himself took up nursing and persuaded Subbanna to take porridge saying, 'Subbu, You must not starve like this. You must drink this. It acts like a soft cushion to the starved stomach...' Subbanna took it, but suddenly vomitted spilling it on the ruler himself. Gently wiping it off, Chamaraja said, 'Call me if Subbu refuses to drink the porridge.' Royal concern was so affectionately personal, intense

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and transcendental. Chamaraja reminds us of the ancient episode of a poet taking rest on the royal couch and falling into deep slumber and the king, on return, finding the poet sleeping, fanned him lest his sleep should be hindered! Such deeds elevate human thoughts and actions!

Subbanna was an actor too. 'Usually he acted as hero. No one would believe that the actor was Subbanna. Such was his grace and perfection! Shamanna and Viraraghava Ayyangar did the female roles. "I doubt if Henry Irving known for his perfection to depict Shakespeare's Iago could do as well as Subbanna did in the Indian version of Othello - Surasena", remarked Prof. Fraser, tutor to Krishnaraja Wodeyar. Bidaram Krishnappa acted as Dushtabuddhi and fisherman. Unique and sublime indeed was the cultural atmosphere at Mysore then. 'Only after the Maharaja was fully satisfied during rehearsal, a drama was allowed to be enacted before the public, said K. Vasudevacharya.

* * * * *

R.K. VENKATARAMA SASTRI

(November 10, 1910 - April 1993)

Rudrapatnam has been a musical cradle and nursery of Classical Carnatic music. Situated on the bank of River Cauvery, it symbolises musical *pravāha.* Virtually it could be claimed that Cultural Cauvery has been flowing westwards from Tiruvaiyaru to Rudrapatnam with Tyagaraja *śiṣya parampara* through Wallajah Venkataramana Bhagavatar, Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Veena Subbanna and the Mysore-Rudrapatnam families presenting multi-sided musical stalwarts enriching the art as vocalists, violinists, vainikas, etc. They have all planted Mysore belt on the musical map of Bharat.

Bettadapura Veena Narayanaswamy was a musical soul. He was a voco-violinist and disciple of Moogur Subbanna. His son-in-law, Krishna Sastri was a scholar-musician who was giving harikathas. Sannaka was his wife. All their four sons were musical souls. R.K. Venkatarama Sastri was the first son, whose grandson R.K. Sriramkumar, is now a promising violinist. R.K. Narayanaswamy (1914) was the second. He had his training under his father and later under Musiri Subramania Ayyar and was a vocalist. The popular R.N. Tyagarajan and Dr. R. Tharanathan who sing as duos are the Rudrapatnam Brothers. R.N. Tyagarajan is Assistant Director, Doordarshan. R.K. Ramanathan, M.A. (1917) who

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had his training under his father, was giving concerts as a vocalist. He was a teacher in english in a high school and later professor/lecturer (after retirement) in Bangalore University. **R.K. Srikantan, the last of the musical quartette, secured for the family the coveted honour of Sangita Kalanidhi.** The musical heritage is being continued by the next generation also like Srilatha and R.K. Ramakanth. R.K. Venkatarama Sastri, inheriting the musical legacy of not only his family but also of the immense disciple-line of Tyagaraja, had his training under the distinguished Veena Subbanna of Mysore. He had his initial training in music with Venkata Rao for two years early in his teens. Sāstri then had a full course of training with Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore T. Chowdiah during 1928-1938 and inherited much of the mastery of the maestro noted for his seven-stringed violin and melodic excellence. Mysore Vasudevacharya had given Venkatarama Sastri special coaching. The musical fervour of Sastri was so intense and dedicated that his academic studies had to be discontinued with Intermediate at the Mysore University.

Sastri made his debut as 'second' to guru T. Chowdiah at Bangalore, then at Sri Tyagaraja Aradhana, Tiruvaiyaru and later at Sri Ramalingaswami Festival. Quite soon, he became one of the front-rank violinists known for his traditional presentation with perfect *sruti* and *nāda suddham.* He had provided able accompaniment to most of the top artistes during his long tenure of over six decades as violinist. An artiste with spiritual inclinations, he was much devoted to Sri Tyagaraja and the celebration of the *aradhana* at Tiruvaiyaru. He has trained numerous disciples including brother Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan, grandson Sriramkumar, etc.

Sastri was Staff Artiste, All India Radio for thirty-four years from the date of its inception in 1938. In fact, there was a spurt of concerts during the last years of his life and age had not withered his artistic skill, musical mastery and performing talents. He was a respected figure.

Honours & Titles:

Kalaimamani from Tamil Nadu Eyal, Isai, Nataka Mandram.
Sadguru Gnananda Sangeet Sammelan honours in 1989.
Sangeet Nataka Academy Award in 1989.

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R.K. SRIKANTAN

Date of birth	:	January 14, 1920
Place of birth	:	Rudrapatnam, Mysore
Academic Qualification	:	Graduate of Mysore University (1947)
Parents	:	Krishna Sastri - Sannakka
Gurus in musical training	:	Father, a scholar-musician who was also giving harikathas. Brother, R.K. Venkatarama Sastri, a reputed violinist
Debut	:	In his fifteenth year
Post held	:	Music Producer, All India Radio, Mysore and Bangalore for 32 years and retired.
Publications	:	*Karnataka Sangita* in kannada in 1985 *Pallavi* in kannada in 1988 Kanakadasara Kritigalu with notation in 1990 *Srikanta* (A Compilation of Articles) in 1995
Connected activities	:	Member, Experts' Advisory Committee, Music Academy. Member, Karnataka Sangita Nritya Academy for six years. Visiting Professor, Government Music College, Palghat Teaching assignments with Venkatesa Temple Committee, Pittsburgh, U.S.A. in 1985/86. Visiting Professor, Department of Oriental Music, University of York, Toranto (six months)
Concert tours abroad	:	U.S.A., Canada

R.K. Srikantan hails from a musical family of Rudrapatnam with a rich heritage and is a fifth generation artiste of merit in the Tyagaraja Śiṣya *Parampara*. He was blest with a musical spoon with a scholar-musician as father and a distinguished violinist as elder brother. It is not incorrect to state that the cultured waters of the Cauvery had notionally turned to flow westwards from Tiruvaiyaru to Mysore (Rudrapatnam) since even the next generation of Rudrapatnam vocalists and instrumentalists are already well entrenched on the concert stage with a bang. The musical affluence of the hierarchy is remarkable. Further Srikantan was born and bred up in the heydays of musical surfeit at Mysore with the tallest of artistes of Karnataka making it their home and artistes from other areas making a bee-line taking it a life-time achievement to sing at the Court of Mysore rulers and earn recognition and name. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar happened to hear young Srikantan's music and he forecast a bright future for the boy noting his talents. And it has proved true. The serenity and musical mastery of R.K. Venkatarama Sastri fully

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devolved on Srikantan. It is said that Srikantan used to flash back frequently in his mind phases and phrases of the rendition of Sastri and other masters. Dusserah and Ram Mandir Festivals added to the musical bee-hive activity at Mysore. The Palace wound up its musical wing only on and from May 1, 1959 consequent on the abolition of rulers' privy purses.

When Venkatarama Sastri moved over to Madras, Srikantan was helped in expanding his horizon of musical activity and contacts. Legacy, hard training and innate abilities soon elevated him to top echelons. His pronunciation of *sahitya* is clear, His laya is immaculate. His presence on the concert stage is solid. His style of rendition is traditional with its best musical concept, range and content. He is blest with a ringing *gamaka*-rich voice which commands assertive mastery. He provides planned concerts since he is able to draw on his rich, varied repertoire. His is *ātmārta sangītam* (soulful, self-satisfying music). Raga delineation and swara elaboration are, on the pattern of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar, measured with live musical ethos. In fact, he is described as the last of the surviving veterans of traditional Carnatic vocal music. He has been playing a noble role in popularising the songs of Haridasas bringing out the immeasurable depth and range of *bhava* and *rasa.* His lec-dems are enlightening and weighty.

In 1976, Bangalore University desired to have his services to start degree and post graduate courses in music. As there was difficulty in securing his release from All India Radio, the proposal was shelved.

He has been bringing up a rich crop of talented musicians as disciples including his son, Ramākānta, daughter Ratnamala Prakash, M.S. Sheela, T.S. Satyavathi, H.K.Narayanan, Santa Narasimhan and Uma Gopalaswami. The prayer in *Taittiriopaniṣad* (*Śikṣāvallī*) *(Āmāyantu bṛhmacāriṇassvāha...)* finds its echo here. The above *upaniṣadic* criterion is fully satisfied in the magnificent roles of Tyagaraja, Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Patnam Subramania Ayyar, Vina Kuppa Ayyar and such others. Srikanta too comes under this category in having coached many who too could now claim the legacy of Tyagaraja *Śiṣya Parampara!* In this, he closely follows the Sangita Bhiṣma, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar who incidentally holds the record for presenting numerous Sangita Kalanidhis!

Honours & Titles:

Where the flower is rich in its honeyed fragrance, bees rush to it. Even so titles came of their own to Srikantan during the last five decades:

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Gana Bhaskara by Annavasati Sangha, Bangalore	1947
Best Teacher honour from Bangalore Corporation	1973
Gana Kala Pravina by Guru Seva Mandali, Bangalore	1976
Karnataka Sangita Ratna by Sabhas, Bangalore	1978
Central Sangit Natak Akademy Award	1979
Karnataka State Sangit Academy Award	1981
Sangita Kala Ratna by Gayana Samaja, Bangalore	1981
Gayaka Choodamani by Tulaseevana Sangita Parishat, Trivandrum	1983
TTK Memorial Award by Music Academy, Madras	1983
Haridasa Award by Purandara Pratishtana, Bangalore	1991
Palani Subramania Pillai Award by Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore	1992
Chowdiah Memorial National Award	
Saptagiri Sangita Vidwan Mani by Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams	1994
Karnataka Rajya Sangita Vidwan by Karnataka State Government	
Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar Memorial Award, Mysore	1995
Sangita Kalanidhi by Music Academy, Madras	1996

Disc recordings are available.

A few observations from some prominent disciples of R.K. Srikantan (which equally apply to veteran traditional gurus of old) call for mention here:

> 'One may be at his best in exhibiting his art in person; another may excel in communicating his skill. Kalidasa says that he who possesses both should be the head of teachers. My guru epitomises both. A strict disciplinarian, he inspires and instils faith and confidence.'
>
> — T.S. Sathyavathi in *Sruti*

> 'Even at the age of 75, my guru devotes his time for daily practice. He tells us to develop and retain voice control, cultivate disciplined food habits and stick to time-schedules. He wants us to evaluate our own music. He did not give me notation but expected me to memorise all. He is a treasure-trove of knowledge and experience.'
>
> — M.S. Sheela in *Sruti*

To quote an admirer from Bangalore, Srikantan is 'a shining star of the Sanketi community representing perhaps the ultimate in terms of dedication, excellence and achievement'.

> Note : 1 It is common knowledge that the objectives, aims, training and mode of presentation of Classical Carnatic music by veterans like Srikantan and by the succeeding fabulous and popular generation of artistes differ much. There is indeed a conflict of approach which could not be fully bridged. This factor has been beautifully brought out by Ramākānt, son of Srikantan. *Vide* Part II-C.

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NOTE : 2 This section 'Cauvery flows westwards' mentions but a single line of discipleship. The *Garlands* have detailed the memorable lives of dozens of distinguished musicians, composers, etc., of Karnataka and its cultural capital, Mysore; the sum total of all of them is to be considered together. R.K. Srikantan is specifically mentioned in this section as he happened to be crowned 'Sangita Kalanidhi' by the Music Academy, Madras during 1995-96 session when this section was written.

Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai

(October 19, 1888 - 1972)

It was the age of titans, colossuses and wizards in every field. Namakkal Kavignar Ramalingam Pillai was a patriot-poet of lustrous eminence. The first Poet Laureate of Tamil Nadu, he belonged to the unadulterated tribe of nationalists like Subramania Bharati, Va.Ve.Su and others. Son of a police constable of Salem district, he was taluk office clerk, teacher, painter, poet and a voracious writer. A man of broad, liberal and progressive views, his songs were the staple of freedom struggle workers. He translated *Bhaja Govindam* on the advice of Rajaji. For the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha led by Rajaji during the Freedom Movement, he composed the most popular song:

Kattiyillai rattamillai yuddham onru varuhudām.

(*Sans* sword, *sans* blood-shed,
A war is seen on the horizon!
Lay faith in basic truth;
Arise, awake and join.)

The nationalist-poet was referring to the Satyagraha Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhiji. Poets lent their cultured literary and musical shoulders to the movement and threw themselves into the Struggle heart and soul.

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PART II-B

PANCHA RATNĀS
among
TAMIL COMPOSERS

Music Education

"Children are naturally exuberant. They love to sing, skip and dance. Let them express themselves freely; you can guide their natural good taste into a mature appreciation. A child's musical education should start early, preferably by the age of three.

"I would prefer children to experiment with simple wind instruments.

"The person listening should go out to meet the mind of the composer as revealed by the performer.

"The majority of children have an inborn sense of melody and rhythm. Trained along the lines I have suggested..., they will gain a love and understanding of the great masterpieces that will last them all their lives."

— Yehudi Menuhin in
Sunday Standard / Shanmukha.

* * *

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MUTHU TĀṆḌAVAR

Composer & Trail-Blazer in *Padams*
(Late 16th century A.D.)

Muthu Tāṇḍavar, along with Aruṇāchala Kavirāyar and Marimuthā Pillai, constitute the Trinity of Tamil Composers called the Sirkazhi Mūvar. Tandavar has positively done meritorious and positive service to music and tamil composition with his *kirtanas* and *padams*. His lyric is couched in simple tamil, the *sahitya* does not suffer from verbiage; the ragas originally chosen as seen from a publication of 1905 are from the prime ragas in vogue. The *kirtanas* are principally on the Cosmic Lord, Sri Nataraja and even in *padams*. He is the principal hero *(nāyaka)*. Tandavar occupies a distinguished and honoured place among renowned *vāggēyakāras* without doubt. He is the earliest *padam* composer in tamil.

That he hailed from Sirkazhi is clear from legends. The place gave the immortal Apostle Thiru Gnānasambandar and many others. Its beautiful temple even now celebrates the *Thirumulaipāl Utsavam* annually as a mark of devotional respect to Celestial Motherhood in suckling baby Sambandar when it was alone and crying. (This is fully covered in *Yet Another Garland*). The parentage of Tāndavar is not known. That he belonged to a family of temple-servants is mentioned. Muthu should have been his original name. Tāndavar should have been a suffix added to his name after he become a supreme composer on Sri Nataraja whose *ānanda tāṇḍavam* (cosmic dance) is hailed as the primeval origin and source of dance. Muthu delighted in singing songs on 'tāṇḍāvam' and 'Tāṇḍavar' (Sri Nataraja) and thus came to be honoured by being called 'Tāndavar'. This stands to reason.

He was perhaps leading a wayward life, suffering from an incurable disease and attached to a woman servant of the dasi community in the temple. He was sent out and stricken by sorrow and anguish, he was brooding over his fate in the ample corridors of the vast temple. Goddess took pity on him and came in the guise of the daughter of the temple archaka and bade him to go to Chidambaram for his salvation. Muthu did likewise and found his salvation. This is the legend.

He was not trained in music nor in language and was a novice. He was instructed to bring out a song based on the first word he heard on the day of visit. Thus his pioneering effort was

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'Bhūloka Kailāsagiri Chidambaramallār
Bhuvanattir vērum uṇḍō?' (Kalyāni in old book &
Bhavapriya in new book)

inspired by the catch-word from a casual expression of a devotee. The legend mentions that he got five gold coins from the Lord Himself for every song! It should have been quite a sumptuous and profitable venture indeed for him! Payment for ***bhakti!***

Sixty kirtanas have been brought to notation by Sangita Kalanidhi T.N. Swaminatha Pillai, then Lecturer in Music, Annamalai University and published by the University in 1955. Earlier Parthasarati Naidu had published all available songs of Tandavar in 1905 without notation.

The Period of Tandavar is tentatively ascribed to 16th century. Probably he came from the Isai Velalar community and no wonder music - particularly *rasa*-soaked *padam* - came to him in a rich measure effortlessly.

* * *

Kirtans:

A few songs are considered below for the beauteous felicity of concept, clarity of lyric, the excellence of description the aptness of music.

Bhūloka Kailāsagiri: (*Kalyani* and *Jampai* in old book & *Bhavapriya* and *Misra Jampai* in Pillai's book.)

There is no place to match the grandeur of Chidambaram, the Seat of Cosmic Dance. Tandavar gives an attractive, yet succinct description of the town and the temple and then avers that a hundred-thousand eyes were needed to see and enjoy it:

Bhūtalattōrellām kāṇa nūrāyiram kaṇ vēṇḍum!

While the town with its vast stretch needed a lakh of eyes, Tandavar slashes down the number to just a thousand eyes to witness the gorgeous effulgent, inimitable Cosmic Dance of the Lord, the prime source of dances at the Kanaka Sabha (hall):

"Ādikkoṇḍār anda vediikkaik kāṇa kaṇ āyiram veṇḍāmō?"

Why not let in all the hundred-thousand eyes to witness the dance? Tandavar has a point. The sabha hall cannot accommodate them all and

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probably people would be screened and only the rasika would be let in to ensure that the performance is not hindered! Tandavar realised that the degree of culture needed to enjoy the magnificence and opulence of the town was basically different from that, a *sine quo non,* to appreciate music and dance and that at the Everestian level by the Originator Himself! So, he would silently allow the remaining 90000 eyes to melt and wend their way back to their abodes chattering on the joy of seeing the town and the towers! A very practical assessment indeed!

In this subtle arithmetic, Papanasam Sivan, another master *vāggēyakāra* of the 20th century, also figures. He requisitions a ten-million eyes to witness the grandeur of the procession of the Lord of Mylapore, Sri Kapaliswarar:

"Kāṇakkaṇ kōḍi vēṇḍum - Kapāliyin bhavani - Kāṇa" — *Khambodi*

There is reason and substance in the arithmetic he adopted. Four centuries had passed by since Tandavar sang. Further Mylapore is in a metropolis with its teeming millions and the procession is on the broad streets. Hence ten million eyes is a sound projection especially so, in the thirties of 20th century. Tandavar and Sivan both score high in assessments too.

Philosophy:

Ennai enakkut teriyaccholvāi - Thillaip Ponnambalattarase	*Ananda Bhairavi* in old & *Abheri* in Pillai's.
(Oh Lord, Reveal to me what I am - *Aham brmāsmi.*	Here he invokes the *Adwaita* Philosophy.
'Ādinadeppadiyō, Naṭanam nīr Ādinadeppadiyō?'	*Kalyani.* This song gives the omnipotence, omniscience, etc. of God. (Probably as God is eternal, Pillai has allowed it to retain its original tune and the raga permitted to enjoy its association! This is perhaps the *only* song where the raga had not been changed.

Songs like *Kaṇḍavar Viṇḍilare* are philosophical. Tandavar probably was an admirer of Apostle Sundaramurty Nayanār for his *sakha bhava* with the Lord since he mentions him in many songs. In this admiration, his padam orientation and inclinations could also be seen. Tandavar takes a leaf of *Bhaja Govindam*

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of Sri Sankaracharya in song *Innam Piṛavāmalē āḷaỹ kēḷai (Nadanamakriya* in old and *Madyamavati* in *Pillai's). Ini śumakka mudiyādu - dēkam, Mānickavāchakar pērenukkuttara vallāyo* and some others are songs praying for salvation. The sixty songs are all soaked in *bhakti* and are in chaste lucid tamil.

Padams:

Śriñgāra is but one kind of *bhakti* expressed through music and dance with an air of eroticism. Muthu Tandavar is popularly known for his lilting *padams* flowing with the sweet milk and fragrant honey of chaste dignified *śringāra.* Probably he set the trend for other padam-composers in tamil. His close association with the *dāsi,* his exposure to the big temples at Sirkali and Chidambaram with their unique relevance to art, dance and music and his familiarity with music and dance concerts at temples and dramas *(teru kūttus)* made him pre-eminently qualified to take to *padams.* And he himself presumably belonged to an artiste family as his portrayal is vivid and conjuring.

Theruvil Varānō (Khamas) was a very popular padam for *abhinaya* in yester decades. Lord Nataraja is the nayaka. The *Virahotkanthita nayaki* is sore at His absence:

'Will He by chance come about in the street?
Will He not glance back awhile?
Will He not stop in front of my house and whisper a message or two?
I am not able to while away my time and
Have none to send a message!
. . . . . .
I realised the Truth and understood his signs!
My passion is satisfied. My soul is cooled...'

T. Balasaraswati and other danseuses used to delight in presenting delectable *abhinaya* in this.

'Are You not vexed with her betrayal of You...
Did not I warn against touching her even when you
experienced the first taste of love for her?...'

— *Nēśamēn pūśalēn - āśai yēn pēśurir* *(Sourashtram)*

(The *'swiya'*- lawfully married wife - is concerned at the entry of another lady. The *khandita* nāyaki scolds her Lord for taking Ganga on His head!)

'He will come', 'He will come', they persist in saying. But
None announces that He had come!
'The sakhis will wander up and down the house (all to nothing):
But none to approach Him and announce my love!
etc.,

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(Varuvār varuvāreṇṛeṇṛeṇ manadaittēṛṛuvārallāl Vandārenbāraik kāṇgilēn.) (in Kalyani)

The *Nayaki*, a *prositabhartrika* type, is disgusted with the poor efficiency of her sakhis - all good for nothing girls whispering this and that.

Tandavar has done a *padam* giving a message to the Lord in raga *Todi:-*

'Dendanittēn enṛu solvīr Natesarku nān.

Probably the Lord of Chidambaram has at long last come! Then do they fling at each other in hot embrace as one sees in films, soon to quarrel and separate? *Śṛiñgāra* delights more in suggestion than in action perhaps! Here is the *samyoga nayaki.*

'Swami, is it fair for you to behave so?
You float your hand over my breast!
You seek to plant a kiss on my face!
You adorn my head with flowers!
And you play with me embracing all the while?'

'Our caste, Sir, is endowed with self-respect...
This is Siva *sthala*, the *jnana pītham!*
And this is the cultured Ponnambala *kṣētra..*"

'Mr., beware. I am not to be taken so lightly. I have self respect and this is a kṣetra and a centre of culture. You are hailed by Vedas. Yet You behave like this!'

'Sarasamippaḍi seyyalāmō, Swāmi Nīr...' (Kalyani)
(Can You stoop to do so?)

'Vēṇḍāmidellām Kāriyamalla - Tīṇḍādē nillum (Saveri)

(Please desist from your pranks. These are not acts permissible.
Don't touch me; stop.)

No wonder the Lords (I mean, deities) had *dēvadāsis* attached to temples for music and dance till the Abolition of Devadasis Act came into force! In this song, the girl warns Him that her parents would not care for the fact that He happens to be the 'Tillai Tāndavarāyar' (presiding deity). But He knows that the *nayika's* protests are feigned and so he drops in at night and angles for her with flower-cords. He behaves! (If one is interested in what He does, he is referred to the song itself).

The *Prouda Nayaki,* an adept in love-making, knows the heart of the *Nayaka* (Lord). 'Go and bring Him, dear sakhi', she tells her friend, 'if you tell Him, He is sure to come', she confides. (*Aḷaittuvā pōdi, aḍi māne*' (*Nilambari*). The raga

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for nights is chosen and she takes a cajoling stance with her sakhi calling her affably as a deer — *(mānē)* and crediting her with capability and assurance - *'nīr śonnāl varuvān, Prāṇēsar'* — if you tell Him, He is sure to come! There is confidence and self-assurance in the words of the heroine; and while he endearingly calls her 'deer', there is an element of anxious command 'Go and fetch him; tell Him, He is sure to come!' The poet uses the colloquial *'varuvan'* (he would come - in singular) though she hails him as Pranesar with respect. The emotion-packed mind is presumably shown to be restless!

Foreigners have referred to the obsession of Indian poets, artists, sculptors, etc. with breasts. Tāndavar is no exception. He had 'affairs' and knew "things" first-hand!

25 padams are available in print. It is not clear whether Muthu Tāndavar had composed any as from nāyaka to nayaki or sakhi. There is dignified love in most of his *śṛiṅgāra* portrayal. His style allures; there is vivid portrayal and focus on human emotions.

Nindastuti:

Nindāstuti comes in the song *'Ettanaittavam seidārō - mānē'* (*Kalyani*):

"He who killed Dakṣa, His own father-in-law, professes solicitude!

'Strange that He who was unashamedly naked,
now sports a lot of silk garments!

'He was just a *paradēsi* (without kith or kin).
Now He has the world as relations!

'He knew nothing but the cries of the deer in his hand;
Now He takes to music!

'He carried liquor before but
He is hailed as a ripe old Saiva (absolute tee-totaller)!

'He was dancing in burning-ghats;
Now he possesses lands called Tillai!' (And so it proceeds...)

The Cosmic Dancer was his God, *hero, nāyaka* and benefactor. For pure devotion to Him, whose 'Tāṇḍavam' sustains the balance in the universe, Muthu became Muthu Tāṇḍavar and rightly so. He was supreme in his riotous conception, chaste music and composing mastery.

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A disservice to Tāṇḍavar? Tāṇḍavar wronged!!

An important feature in T.N. Swaminatha Pillai's exercise in providing notation to the sixty kirtanas of Tāṇḍavar calls for special notice. Out of the sixty, Pillai has changed the ragas for fity-nine with a vengeance. As if how the solitary *kirtana* escaped the wrath of the massive change, one is tempted to change the lyric of the song from—

"Āḍinadeppadiyō Naṭanam Nīr"	*to 'Adu tappinaḍeppaḍiyo?'* (*Kalyani*)
(How You had danced?)	— addressed to the Lord - to
(How it had escaped?)	— to be addressed to the raga.)

The publication of the songs in 1905 earlier shows that Tāṇḍavar had handled major, popular and *rakti* ragas like *Sankarabharanam, Kalyani, Todi, Nilambari, Surati* and *Pantuvarali* while Pillai had changed them mostly to a good number of *apūrva* ragas as if change was a dire need. The ragas given in the 1905 edition should have positively been those given by Tandavar and passed on by tradition and *karṇa parampara.* That book had been supervised by the Mailam Āḍīnam, which is very much interested in propagation of tamil and spiritual endeavours. The wholesale change was presumably uncalled for and had not been explained with acceptable, valid reasons. The unique *'talaq, talaq, talaq'* passes comprehension. Was Tāndavar lacking in musical acumen. Were the ragas in currency out of date? Can a notating musician change all the ragas in toto in this fashion? If the ragas then in currency as reflected in the book of 1905 were not those of Tāndavar, could he be called a *vāggēyakāra* or composer of eminence? Does not the massive change pull down the image of Tāndavar and is not such an act a slur on his reputation?

T.N. Swaminatha Pillai avers in his preface:

'T.K.C., Kalki and Sadasivam Ayyar asked me to provide notation to the sixty songs. Till January 1942, I had done the work for thirty songs. I sang them before the distinguished panel of top musicians and authorities set up in Annamalai University. The issue WHY I HAD CHANGED THE RAGAS CAME UP. I said that I had used the popular ragas as well as the talas in use and that I intend to do the same for the remaining kirtanas also and that I was not aware how the previous publishers had given the ragas and talas and that IF MY MODE OF DOING THE WORK WAS NOT APPROVED, I WOULD STOP FURTHER WORK ON IT. That was my final decision. Musiri Subramania Ayyar said that the panel had to object since a decision had been taken to adopt the same ragas and talas given in earlier publications. Since there should be exception to rules, to accept the songs of mine was decided upon.

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'The Registrar informed me that Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar (a very senior vidwan) had tuned six songs, that they had been approved by the panel and that I could complete the tuning of the remaining songs. On that occasion, I came out without talking much on it.

By April 1942, I had completed the work for all songs. As I desired to cover all the Tandavar's songs only with my tunes and notation, I pressed the point repeatedly. ...At the panel, it was said that for Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar's tunes, some other *sahitya* could be utilised...'

Thus Swaminatha Pillai by his threat to withdraw and by pressures, got his way. The panel had met just five months after the first Tamil Isai Conference at Chidambaram in 1941. Anxiety not to stand on principles, convention and fairness and retard the work of publication of the tunes of Pillai naturally had weighed with the panel. Panel under duress had to submit itself to a *volte face* perhaps. It adjourned on the first day only to succumb on the next!! Alathur Venkatasa Ayyar's tunes and the decision to accept them were all ignored!!!

What should have happened was:

a. Pillai applied a large number of fresh ragas (contrary to the original versions) without an iota of thought of violating the norms and principles and respect to the great composer as well as the guidelines given.

b. He forgot that they were Tandavar's songs and tunes but presumably wanted to show up his ego, expertise and influence or did not think about the sanctity of the original selection of ragas or *was oblivious of them.* Probably he had thought that Tandavar's had to be furbished and improved and he was the born Messiah for it.

c. Pillai was not such an inexperienced musician to think that the original ragas in old publications had little sanctity. If he had thought so, it would have been a very grievous error indeed!

d. Probably he had committed thoughtfully or thoughtlessly the mistake; he had perforce to stick on to the mode and change the ragas for the second batch of thirty also!

e. Once his changes lock, stock and barrel had been accepted, he thought it prudent to get Venkatesa Ayyar's tunes too excluded! Courtesy to a fellow musician did not weigh with him!

Perhaps the whole episode smacks of a feeling of vengeance and perversity. Tandavar was, by this attempt, it would seem, dumped down from the high pedestal of *vāggēyakāra* since it would mean that he gave the lyric and the music was NOT HIS! The *'vak'* was his; and the *'geya'* was NOT HIS! That is the harsh result of Pillai's steam-rolling campaign and success. The threat 'take all of mine or I stay away' yielded the result he wanted but saw Tandavar unseated! Was it a case of 'Pillai *zindabad*' and 'Tandavar *murdabad*' is for experts.

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PAPANASAM MUDALIAR

Renowned Composer In *Nindāstuti:* (17th Century)

'Naḍamāḍi tirinda umakku,
iḍadu kāl udavāmal.....'

Sweet strains of the winsome song in raga *Khamboji,* probably born to co-habit with bharatanatya, waft across the street. The street free from noise pollution in that glorious era (18-19th centuries) carry the song in all its seductive finesse and charm to a titan sitting on the pial of a house in the opposite row. Himself a revolutionary poet of immense grace and concept, he gets lost in the unique *bhāva* in *nindāstuti* sung delectably with *bhāva-rasa.* The composer with deceptive innocence questions the Lord, who incidentally is the Ishṭa Dēvata of the titan too, with cutting sarcasm:

> 'Sir, You have been freely moving about (or, dancing about) unrestrained; but what has happened to debilitate Your left leg?'

The Cosmic Dancer, Sri Nataraja at Chidambaram, is usually seen in His dancing pose with upraised left leg; and this inspires the composer of the song to have a fling at the Lord and cut jokes at His expense! That composer was Papanasam Mudaliar, the renowned composer in *nindāstuti* and the titan who hears the song was the inimitable Gopala Krishna Bharati. The exquisite finesse of the lyric and the *bhava* presented in the song forced him to confide his mind to his young disciple, the future colossus Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar and share his ineffable joy—

> 'Swaminatha, this is Papanasam Mudaliar's kirtana. How elegantly he has brought out the tilting *bhāva* both in lyric and in tune! Such *sāhityam* can flow out only from a born maestro.'

That is sufficient to determine the supreme level of mastery in composition and the grade of the music of Mudaliar. Three centuries have passed by and yet there are few pieces to match Mudaliar's creations. Great and good things force the enjoyer to share his joy with others. It is contagious. Noble music is one such. Only debased thoughts and actions do not lend themselves to be so shared. The fact that Bharati had to share the elixir with young Swaminatha, disciple and son of his good friend, is proof positive of the grandeur of the *bhāva* in lyric and tune.

The Raja of Ramnad was a rasika of stature. Violin maestro Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar, uncle of Semmangudi Dr. Srinivasa Ayyar, played this song at a

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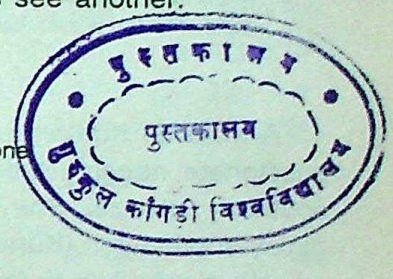
concert. The art-conscious Raja not only learnt the song himself but got the song printed and distributed. That was the measure of appreciation the song elicited, nay, extracted. The song is so couched as if the singer or the dancer poses the query casually to his next-door neighbour in all innocence!

Papanasam Mudaliar excels in sarcasm, teasing and irony apparently in biting language, ostensibly damaging but in reality, bringing out the excellence and effulgence of the Lord in all their merit and grandeur. Mudaliar adopts lucid language, often in colloquial style and weaves out with skill and finesse the *sahitya* well brought out in popular ragas with rapturous effect and enduring impact inlaid with embellishments and allusions. Let us see another:

'Mugattaikkāṭṭiyē dēhamuḷumaiyum
kāṭṭāda mūḍu mandiram yādayya?"

(What could be the subtle secret showing just Thy head alone without revealing Thy body, Sir.)



* * *

But the Cosmic Lord was not his sole target for *nindāstuti* as in the case of the other two composers - Marimutha Pillai and Gopala Krishna Bharati. He was born at Tiruvarur, though called after the name of his native village of Papanasam, near Nagapattinam. Sri Tyagesar of the big temple has been the tutelary deity of the rulers of Thanjavur. The Carnatic Trinity were born there. Apostles of Siva have sung in glory of the deities as also Muthuswamy Dikshitar. How could he refrain from singing on Him in his unique style? Hence he has a fling at Him:

'Pērum nalla Tyāgar!
Ūrum nirai selvat Tiruvarur!
Prayōjanam enna, sollayya?

(Name, the popular Tyagesar; village, the affluent Tiruvarur.
But, of what avail, tell me Sir.)

There are many such songs. *Nindāstuti*, one of the forms approved for songs and verses, provides the most productive and exhilarating field for dancers.

* * *

Mudaliar has authored the *Kumbhēsar Kuravañji*, dance-drama with Kumbhesar as *nayaka.* How he happened to choose the presiding deity of Kumbakonam? Mudaliar had lived in Banadurai North Street there close to the temple of Sri Banapuriswara and he should have composed the *kuravanji* during

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his sojourn there. It was enacted at the instance of Gopu Nataraja Chettiar of Kumbakonam. Ghanam Krishna Ayyar and Ananta Bharati honoured it by singing some songs therefrom. The songs are generally in *tsouka kala* (slow) and his *mudra* is Papanasam. Rich in laya, his songs are inlaid with *solkattus.* Varied *bhava-rasas* are brought to focus. There is another reason for Mudaliar invoking Kumbhesar and not Tyagesar of his place. Some unknown author had already composed the *Tyagēsar Kuravañji* and it was being enacted during Sahaji Raja's time (1684-1710).

> 'Kuravañjis offer plenty of scope for *vipralambha* sringara, with the sakhi playing an important role as *nayika's* messenger. The central character, however, is the *kuravañji* for whom folk songs, tunes and dances are brought in.'
>
> — T.S. Parthasarathy

A word on *Kumbhesar Kuravanji.* The *nayika* is love-lorn and in the uneasy passionate nagging bitterness, she hates even the bright full moon and the southerly breeze. She finds fault with the Lord of Love, Manmatha. The gypsy-soothsayer (Kuravanji) arrives and forecasts happy days ahead. The *nayaka-nayika* join in joy and are united. Kuravanjis are captivating opera-like compositions but are rarely sung or danced in full. *Kumbhesar Kuravanji* is in lucid tamil, with good music, dramatic tempo and presentation. Some *charanas* are in telugu which was the most-favoured language of the royalty then.

Papanasam Mudaliar was patronised by Bava Saheb Ekoji and Tulaja II. Tiruvarur was then the cultural centre of East Thanjavur with its magnificent temple and tank (Kamalalayam). Mudaliar's songs were the craze of dancers and women at domestic functions. The subtle wit, humour, invectives and sarcasm apart, the songs enjoy a profusion of *bhakti* and musical graces.

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ARUNACHALA KAVIRAYAR - EMINENT COMPOSER: (1711 - 1778) or (1712 - 1779)

Arunachala Kavirayar was born of Nallathambi Pillai and Valliammal at Tillayadi near Mayiladuthurai in Thanjavur district. He is considered as one of 'Sirkazhi Trinity' (Mūvar) along with Muthu Tandavar and Marimutha Pillai. He was a contemporary of Marimutha Pillai and the three just preceded the Carnatic Trinity (Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Sastri). While the Sirkazhi Trinity delighted the tamil world with their exquisite songs of *bhakti* - entirely devotional or *śṛingāra* or couched in *nindāstuti,* the Carnatic Trinity born at Tiruvarur (in 1762, 1767 and 1776) laid firm foundation for Classical Carnatic Music with

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songs of rare charm and grace. Sirkazhi is the birth place of Apostle Tirugnana Sambandar and Muthu Tandavar while adjacent Tillayadi has acquired a unique place in the Indian Freedom Struggle through Mahatma Gandhiji.

Tillayadi Munuswami Mudaliar had a daughter who bore the same name as Kavirayar's mother, viz., Valliammal. This Valliammal, born in South Africa in 1897, was working as a plantation worker there. A White was about to shoot Gandhiji in the apartheid-ridden South Africa. The tamil girl instantaneously jumped out and placed herself in front of the budding Father of Indian Independence. The angry white born in hatred and bred in violence left the scene leaving the Apostle of Non-violence thanks to the bravery and agility of the girl, surely a micro version of the Queen of Jhansi. She took part in movements against the racist regime there and died on February 22, 1914, a few days after release from prison! She had not even attained legal majority then! Gandhiji observed:

> 'It was the Madrasis who, of all Indians, were singled out by the Great Divinity that rules over us for this great work.'

There was no Kavirayar or Pillai or Tandavar to immortalise the adventurous episode of Valliammal. Mahakavi Bharati hailed in *Pudumaippeṇ'* —

> *Āṛṛalkoṇḍa Parāśaktiannai, (Āṭṭalkoṇḍa)*
> *naḷ aruḷināloru kaṇṇigaḷāgiyē*
> *ēṛṛi uṇmaigaḷ kūṛa vandittāḷ!'*

Valliammai was one of those genii and Tillayadi presented her. The plant is but a product of the soil and man or woman is but the child of the culture and civilization to which he/she belongs. Hence Valliammal finds an eloquent mention here as she hailed from Arunachala Kavirayar's village.

With my mind still hovering on Tillayadi and its innocent girl-ambassador of innate moral courage who set aloft the Indian flag of 'Service before Self' in distant South Africa, I am reminded of Bharati's telling poem *'Agni Kunju':*

> *'Agnik kuṇjonṛu kaṇḍēn - adai*
> *Angoru kāṭṭiḷōr pondiḍai vaittēn;*
> *Vendu taṇindadu kādu - taḷaḷ*
> *veerattil kuṇjeṇṛum mūppeṇṛum uṇḍo?'*

(I sighted the child of Fire; I placed it in a cavity of forest; forest got devasted by fire. Is there distinction between young and old before the wrath of Fire?)

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(Agnikunju - Valliammal
Kadu - South Africa
Talal : Fight against Apartheid)

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On the demise of his father, Arunachala at the age of twelve joined the Dharmapuram Mutt Institute and his studies progressed well and fast. A pleased Mutt-Head, Sri Ambalavana Desikar saw in him his worthy successor and in a mood of abundant satisfaction confided to him that he could well expect to be his successor hoping that the lad of eighteen then would be dumbfound with joy at the projected elevation and its glamorous status. The boy thought just the opposite and submitted that celebrated works like *Tirukkural* and *Ramayana* extol the life of married man *(grihasta)* and expressed his desire to follow it. The mutt-head accepted the honest averment. Studies over, Arunachala did not plunge into married life; perhaps believed in *vivāham* is *vidya nāśanam* (marriage hinders prosecution of studies) and married only at thirty! When he met by chance his former colleague and head of the branch mutt at Sirkazhi, Chidambaram Pillai, he was invited to settle down there which he did. Fate had earmarked a role for him and to further that, it made Arunachala to seek the friendship of two good musicians, Sattanathapuram Venkatarama Ayyar and Kothandarama Ayyar. He liked their musical expertise and they found in him mastery in tamil poetry. In a fragrant collaboration, they agreed to set to tune *Rama Natakam* which he should compose in tamil. It was a glorious *quid pro quo* in the cause of music, religion, drama, etc. The two musicians took to Madras his compositions upto *Yuddha Kanda* and returned with tidings of very favourable response. *Rama Nataka Kirtanas* were fully composed by Kavirayar and tuned by them.

It was decided to release the first-ever tamil opera at the sannidhi of Sri Ranganatha, Srirangam following what Kambar, author of *Ramayanam* in tamil, had done. Arunachala composed the delectable dance-music piece *En Palli Kondirayyā (Mohanam)* as if questioning the Lord why he had taken to sleeping posture. *Rama Nataka Kirtanas* were approved in 1771 A.D. It is relevant to mention here that Tyagaraja (1767 - 1847) composed the *Prahlada Charitramu* and *Nauka Charitramu* in telugu, Narayana Tirtha (16-17th century) composed *Sri Krishna Lila Tarangini* in sanskrit and Gopala Krishna Bharati the opera on *Nandanar* (1861). It was the golden age of Classical Carnatic music in every aspect of it.

Arunachala Kavirayar was a prolific composer. His works include:

Sirkali Sthala Purānam, Sirkali Kovai,
Hanuman Pillai Tamil and Ajomukhi Nātakam.

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Arunachala's compositions are in lucid tamil and in simple structures appealing to the lay and the scholar. He has brought in prosodic beauties and adopted a style which could appeal whether presented at concerts or in dramas. His songs have been in heavy usage all along and several of them well known in the corners of Tamil Nadu. There are 100 kirtanas and 50 *viruttams* apart from *darus* and drupads. It is said that some interpolations had occurred. Tulajah Raja of Thanjavur, Anandaranga Pillai of Pondicherry and Manali Muthukrishna Mudaliar patronised the Kavirayar and the last performed *Kanakabishekam* to him. Popular ragas have been invoked by the collaboration (Arunachala - Venkatarama - Kothandarama) which are appropriate and pleasing. It does not look like scissoring the script to suit raga or tala or bending the raga to cover the lyric. The plurality of efforts does not betray itself but there is unique homogeneity, happy blend of *sahitya* and *sangita* and elaborately detailed presentation. The invocation, *Vinayaka Śaranam* is in *Sourashtram* while the *mangalam Sri Ramachandranukku Jeyamangalam* is in *Asaveri.* The famous song *Yāro, Ivar yāro, enna pēro, ariyēnē* is in *Bhairavi.* The *ragamalika* song *Enakkun irupadam ninaikka varam aruḷvāi* is another piece in wide use. *Kooni vandale, Pollāda kooni vandāle* in *Mohanam* and *Pāindāne Hanuman (Surati)* are couched in light vein. *Mohanam* would seem to suit several situations and it is availed of again for the song *Rāmanai kaṇṇāra kaṇdānē.*

Many of the songs of Kavirayar have been fruitfully availed of by bharatanatyam artistes since the portrayal of *bhāvas* therein find easy echo in the hearts of the audience and instant emotional appreciation.

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MĀRIMUTHĀ PILLAI - EMINENT COMPOSER: (c. 1712 - 1787)

The Primeval Source of dance inspired Muthuswami Dikshitar too who was struck by the effulgence of the Lord which he records as comparable to that of crores and crores of suns:

"Ānanda Naṭana Prakāśam...
Bhānu kōti kōti samkāśam...'

Three tamil composers of eminence were so infatuated by the grace and grandeur, beauty and effulgence of the magniloquent Cosmic Dancer at Tillai that they have presented the world with matchless songs of varied hues.

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'Sabhāpatikku vēru Deivam
Samānamāgumā - Tillai', extolled an amazed Gopalakrishna Bharati.

'Bhūloka Kailāsagiri Chidambaramallār
Bhuvanattir vērumuṇḍō?', praised Muthu Tāṇḍavar in devout awe.

Gopalakrishna Bharati (1811 - 1881), born at Narimanam near Nagore and who spent his life at Mudicondan, Anandatandavapuram and Mayiladuthurai, developed a spiritual passion for the Cosmic Dancer of Tillai (Chidambaram). Three centuries earlier, Muthu Tandavar, trail-blazer in tamil padams, hailed from Sirkazhi and got salvation singing in praise of the *sthala, mūrti* and *firtham.* Marimutha Pillai followed about two centuries after him and became an ardent devotee of Sri Nataraja. In a crisp sweeping passage, he gave vent to his absolute surrender to the Cosmic Dancer and his abode, Tillai with charming aphoristic brevity:

'Tillaic Chidambaramē - Allāmal -
Vērillai Sundaramē.' *(Anandabhairavi)*

'Sundarame' here may be personification of a devotee or beauty. There is nothing to equal the beauty of Tillai and its relevance to the life and salvation of people. How?

'Kāśinidanir Kailāsarenṟoru Naṭarājarirundu
Pāvanāśam śeivadiduve.
Vāśam śeivōrukku mōśam varādu;
Kilēśam varādu; (and then what?)
Yema pāśam varādu!' (There shall be no threat from the Lord of Death!)

One may notice the rhyming and rhythmic beauty in Kailāsam, Pāvanāśam, Vāśam, Kilēśam and Paśam. Well, hearing the song of Marimutha Pillai that nothing adverse would ensue and that there would be no fear of Death, devotees alight there. Here the devotee-travel guide instinct in Pillai who is interested in getting as many pilgrims as possible to Tiillai, solicitous of their salvation, lays down some guidelines for them:

'Derisittappēraip parisuttarāha..': (The darśan purifies.)
'...iraṇḍōdiraṇḍu gōpurattai kaṇṇāravē kaṇḍu,
Mēlaittisaik gōpurattinir Karpaga Vēḷamuganṟanai vāḷtti ...'

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(Take delight in having a full view of the four towers. Worship Karpaga Vināyaka on the Western Tower; pray before Kumaran on his peacock mount; take bath at Sivaganga and ...)

The Devasthanam may, as well, print this song in *Sourashtram* **in their hand-outs lest some should miss one or two!**

'There is nothing to equal this South Kailas; Its four main outer walls represent the four Vēdas'; and Pillai goes eloquent in *Deivīgasthalamindat Tillai (Purvikalyani).* 'Chant for a minute, that suffices', he announces. Gopalakrishna Bharati was inspired likewise as he too sings, *'Orutaram Śiva Chidambaram enṛu śonnāl pōdumē'.* Did not young Purushottama (later Sri Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal) hear the same advice being given to a hapless lady at the house of Lakshmikanta Kavi at Jagannath to chant the name of Rama with *bhakti* once to regain stolen chastity!

Marimutha Pillai does not stop with praise soaked in *bhakti* but proceeds to establish the truth, underscores his averments with specific instances for the understanding enlightenment of devotees in the song-

'Endat talattaiyumindat talattukkiṇai śollakkūḍādē' (Dēvagāndhāri)

Instances cited include the relief from leprosy of a Gouda Desa ruler and salvation to three pulaiyars of the lowest social strata.

There is no caste rigidity in attaining salvation here, Pillai asserts:

'Pārppān pulaiyan mudaṛ batti śeidē idin mutti perṛidalal' in the song,
'Ennāḷum vāsamāi' in *Bēgada* raga.
(batti = bhakti : mutti = mukti).

Marimutha Pillai sings in spiritual frenzy in chaste tamil, exquisite prosody invoking mostly the principal, popular ragas. He does not go in search of *apūrva* ragas since his songs are to be sung by all and are for the salvation of all. He sang for the devotees. There is probably much more spiritual and religious passion, fervour and emotional vibrancy and intensity in his songs than in those of Muthu Tandavar. There is deep concern and solicitude for the wavering:

'Oru mandirattaiyum nī śebikkādē
inda Tirumandiramaṇṛi.....tavikkādē...'
(Do not chant any but this mantra;
Do not waver and be not restless...)

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'Fate? Afraid that the arms of fate would deny you of the boons of even this *mantra?* No, do not entertain such doubts. Just chant once with devotion 'Siva Chidambaram'; sins of the past shall vanish', advises Pillai in:

"Orukāl Sivachidambaramenṟu
ni śonnāl irukādu ūḻvinai" *(Arabhi)*

* * *

Marimutha Pillai excels in the most well-known *Edukulakhāmbōdi* raga song

'Kālait tūkki niṉṟāḍum Deivamē - Eṉṉai
Kai tūkki aḷ Deivame'

(O! Lord who dances with uplifted leg at Tillai!
Pray lend Thy hand to lift me up.)

Which danseuse of merit has not invoked this matchless song of beauty, charm, *bhāva,* rhythm, anecdotes, description, detail, *bhakti,* music and easy-pace for the musician to elaborate and the dancer to portray with every limb of her god-given body joining in immanent unison in a concerted effort with *adwaitic* concentration to dwell on the radiant glory and the effulgent glamour of Cosmic Dancer?

Sung with the spiritual fervour and melody of the like of Dr.M.S. Subbulakshmi and danced by one of the well-meaning stalwarts of bharatanatya, one is sure to run into *yogic* trance duly blessed, forgetting the mundane pettiness of this world. It would kill pain, ward off illness, outlaw sins and confer *śāntam, soukhyam* and *śivam.* The world is undoubtedly indebted to Pillai for the enchanting, exhilarating piece. This one song caught the imagination of danseuses, rasikas and musicians in a measure rarely enjoyed by others. Pillai was certainly having conjuring visions of the Lord dancing since he inventories each and every item with him and calls into play every limb and part of the body as if they exist all for lauding Him.

This chaste dance of Siva is supported by Nandi on maddala, Narada on yaḻ; there is sruti; and the Celestials, gripped in this enchanting presentation, raise up their hands folding them in devotion unconsciously.

* * *

Marimuthu Pillai was an epitome of a *vāggēyakāra's* subtle sense of wit and humour. *Nindāstuti* - apparently blaming, accusing or deriding but in its deeper sense bringing out the eminence of the other - has been his special field of venture with

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subtle thrusts, pungent ridicule, lucid scorn and derision.

Eg.

'Dear Lord, with what courage can I approach You and pray at Your feet?
There grazes a sturdy bull in front (—the Nandi)!
Snake and tiger threaten from Your sides (—He has them)!
Your stay is at the Tillai jungle!
Your blue neck...
Disgusting to know that You are a *Pittan* (mentally unbalanced)!

— *Ennattuṇivāi nān in Arabhi*

Your home, it is uncertain: *(ambalamāi)...*
Your posture is equally shaky (because of His dancing);
There is nothing inside or outside except white dust (sacred ash)

— *Vidu ambalamāgi (Khāmbodi)*

'What an occupation / job You have!
Even to think of it, one should feel ashamed.
You raved to dig and carry earth for food (Madurai Śiva Līla).

Your Son scores over You *(Tagappan Sāmi* at Swamimalai)
To stifle Thy hunger, You cut the throat of one's son and
Got shot by the arrow of Vijayan's bow!

—*Enna piḷaippu (Sourashtram)*

'Ennēramum oru kālait tūkki noṇḍikkoṇ
ḍirukkiravagai ēdayyā?' *(Todi)*

(What is the secret of Your limping and
keeping a leg uplifted always, Mr.?)

(There follows various derisive reasons, uncomplimentary incidents and causes which might have allegedly contributed to lameness pouring out scorn on the dancing pose in which Nataraja is depicted. This song too has been the delight of danseuses. This is enviable *sakha bhāva* in its worst derisive tone short of abuse. Incidents from legends and puranas are brought in with delectable didactive or convivial ease.)

'Ēdukkittanai mōḍitān umakku endan mīdayyā' in *Surati* raga is another enchanting piece of *nindāstuti* which too was the craze of danseuses.

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Marimutha Pillai takes leave of his patron-god Sri Nataraja for a while and approaches His Consort and plies a series of questions - quite uncomplimentary, scornful and vexatious at that - questioning in endearing but unequivocal terms her wisdom and commonsense in choosing Him as spouse. The questions, allusions, inneundoes slung at Her should have normally driven Her mad but She being Shakti should have been smiling at the childish delights and pranks of Pillai at Her expense:

> 'This Pēyāṇḍi, how could You make up Your mind to bestow Thy love on Him? After all, a wanderer, with no abode to call his own and no asset except a bull; and he runs about abegging! When pangs of hunger are not quenched, he has no qualms in taking pre-tasted remnants! Got beaten with cane....!'

The songs are the popular padams:

Enna kāriattukkinda Pēyāṇḍi mēl icchai *(Nilambari)*
Eninda parākku *(Bhairavi)*
Ethaik kaṇḍu icchai koṇḍāi, magaḷē *(Kalyani)*

* * *

Pillai should have been a nattuvanar (dance-master) as he brings into prominent focus the different limbs of the dancer in his songs. If Menaka, Urvasi and Rambha and such other celestials raise their hands in worship as his songs are sung, what is there to say of the humble citizens of this planet? Says he: *'Śindai magiḻndu Vānōr sennimēr karam tūkka...'*

'Music is the dance of words;
Dance is the music of human limbs', said M.S. Ramaswami Sastriar in *Indian Aesthetics.* Dance is indeed the music of limbs gracefully presented to tunes impregnated with speaking phrases and words by composers like Marimutha Pillai, who excels, exhilarates and enlivens all.

His twenty-five songs are in lucid tamil with colloquial lyric and pulsating references. A song in *nindāstuti* when portrayed with charming *abhinaya* enchants, envelops, engages. It keeps the audience of every hue absorbed and in good humour owing to inspired poses giving shapes to varied *bhāvas* and *rasas. Nindāstuti* songs are like garlands of multi-hued, fragrant flowers of diverse shapes, radiance and attraction. Marimutha Pillai evidently had good insight into puranas and ancient lore and was conversant with the modes of

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presentation of lyrical beauties and embellishments. He wrote not only for the elite and the lay but for dancers, musicians and dramatists. They exuded *bhakti,* wit, humour and all that is necessary to grip the attention of the audience. He has deliberately chosen well-known ragas, the impact of which is impressive.

Kālai tūkki nindrāḍum	- *Yadukulakhambodi*
Ettai kaṇḍu icchai koṇḍāi	- *Kalyaṇi*
Ēdukkittanai mōḍi tān umakku	- *Surati* and
Ennēramum	- *Tōḍi*

have been the favourites of dancers and rasikas. Language is pleasing and flows like a perennial fountain down the gradient with assurance and melody. The tempo is majestic with apt *kālapramāṇa.*

Pillai had composed the *Puliyur Veṇbā* also on the Lord of Chidambaram as a prayer to restore his first son to the family. There is a commentary on *Puliyur Veṇbā* (also called *Puliyur Ślēḍai Veṇbā*) by Venbapuli Veluswami Pillai. The work was published in 1855, 1863, 1888 and by Tiruvaduthurai Adeenam in 1967. Puliyur Venba was a text in 1888 for graduates of Madras University. Pillai had also authored *Chidambaresar Virali Vidu Tūdu, Varunapuri Adimuleswar Kuravanji, pallus,Thillai Vidangan, Ayyanar* and *Nondi Natakam.*

Marimutha Pillai is said to be the son of one Deivangal Perumal and had learnt under Ganganada Desikar. He hailed from Tiruvidangam near Sirkazhi and Chidambaram. Pillai was a perennial reservoir of intuitive grace and his *sahitya* flows like a *jaru* or perennial fountain down the melodic hill. Tempo is majestic and the sense of *kālapramāna* inherent in the songs is unexcelled.

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GOPALAKRISHNA BHARATI
FATHER OF TAMIL OPERA
(1811 - 1881)

If Gopalakrishna Bharati was trailblazer in many respects and composer *non pareil,* he was also a musical discourser (*Hari katha* artiste) *par excellence.* Sometimes, the theme would not be fixed in advance for his *kālakṣēpa.* He would take the dais and ask someone to suggest a catchword. On the basis of that word, he would develop his puranic story and the day's programme would be that. Once, little Swaminathan (the later Dr.U.Ve.Sa.) offered *'kanaitān'* as the catchword. Bharati said immediately,

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'Fearing death by snake-bite, Emperor Parikṣit adopted multi-pronged security measures. But the Lord of Death, Yama roared and shouted—

"Ennatān seidālum ivan enakku tappuvānā" enṛu kanaittān.'

(Let him take whatever loads of securities he wants.
Can he still hope to escape from my dictates?)

Then he elaborated the story of the great Parikṣit. This was feasible because of his fabulous knowledge of puranic lores, unequalled mastery of *sangita* and *sahitya.* The orphan from Narimanam, a life-long *bṛhmachāri,* the first composer of musical opera on a socio-religious theme in tamil and a firm believer that pure *bhakti* transcends status and birth (caste, etc.), gives expression to sublime thoughts as in:

'Ariya puḷaiyar mūvar padam aḍaindārenṛē Puraṇam
Parindu solla kēṭṭom...'
—Sabhapatikku Vēru Deivam *(Abhogi)*
'Sāttiram karṛālum, çatur marai uṇarndālum
. . . . . .
Karuṇaikku pāttiramāhādē.'

Dr.U.Ve.Swaminatha Ayyar had said that Bharati was not blest with even tolerable physical features. But it encased a vibrant soul of profound wisdom, of music and dance of ethereal beauty and nature. For sheer charm of tune, grace and potential for *abhinaya,* is there any composition to match his song in *Vasanta?*

'Naṭanam Ādinār - Vegu
Nāgarikamāgavē Kanaka Sabhaiyil Ānanda (Naṭanam)'
(The Lord danced with grace and refinement.
He did so quite in accord with cultured standards!)

Bharati provides ravishing scope for varied and vivid exhibition of mastery in masculine aesthetic manoeuvres and dancing skills in the *charana* and the *jathi* that follows. When the Lord commences His Cosmic dance *(Tāṇḍavam),* the entire universe manifests and reverberates in unison to a dazzling, terrifying measure. Even the waters of the Ganges get spilled out. Bharati does not forget to mention that the entire event witnesses—

the committed involved singing of the bard himself,
the swing of the hair locks of the Lord and
of the snake that adorns his neck and such other details.

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The whole creation dances in esoteric frenzied ecstasy; how? *'Tōm, tōm', 'Padavigal tandōm'* (We grant you all the posts - certainly not ministerial posts to fight with but placements in the Divine World!). One sees Bharati dancing in tune with his favourite Lord. Yes, he too danced for the welfare of humanity since he took for himself not a pie of whatever he earned!

Portrayal of a Phase

The *Garlands* have brought out extensively the remarkable and impressive contribution of Gopalakrishna Bharati to music, dance, tamil and art in general. I made specific mention of the pathos-laden song *Varuhalāmō,* that song of spartan brevity in raga *Manji* which has been the dancer's delight and musician's paradise to present multi-hued *bhāvas* - devotion and prayer, self-pity and march towards realisation, anxiety and expectation, surrender and salvation. Philosophically, it portrays the urge of the *Jivātma* to sink its identity in the *Paramātma.* Nandanar, an apostle of Lord Siva, born in the lowliest of the lowly communities, a slave in a farm, unlettered with no exposure to culture or civilization as one construes them, lives in an environment of absolute neglect and unenviable poverty in a slum. Bharati, himself an orphan and chosen victim of harsh Fate, if it exists, brings out the appealing case of Nandanar with the consummate dexterity and finesse of a born poet, sculptor, painter, musician, dancer and intellectual, all in one, in the tamil opera, *Nandanar* released in 1861. It signified a revolution in thought, speech and action in social, religious and political spheres in a measure few poets could boast of. The corners of tamil-speaking areas reverberated with dramas, cinemas, lectures, kālakṣēpams and concerts bringing the mission and message of *Nandanar* to millions in successive generations paving the way for Mahatmaji's crusade against untouchability and its ultimate success eight decades later and shortly before political independence under Rajaji.

Nandanar's sublime heart is firmly set on the divine effulgence of the Cosmic Dancer of Tillai (Chidambaram), Sri Nataraja. However he was not born free to go as he was a prey to social disabilities and economic shackles. The landlord ill-countenances his spiritual longing and candid efforts. With ingenuous adroitness, Bharati spins out a beautiful opera prolonging the agony and pathos with immaculate eloquency balancing overwhelming *bhakti,* uninhibited longing for the Lord and the passion for darsan with the devotee's utter inability to go without permission and the well-nigh impossibility of that permission forthcoming. The pliant heart of devotee Nandanar cries, pleads, prays, self-accuses and sings with pathetic sincerity and surrender to his *Ishta Devata*

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and to his master too. The hapless case of Nandanar sees favourable lights miraculously and he gets the long-delayed permission from his landlord, who realises that absolute *bhakti* and spotless character place the lowliest man at the pedastal and surrenders. The poet creates the landlord in a brahmin to highlight truth specifically for appeal to the masses at large at a time when orthodoxy was the rule! Being a brahmin himself, Bharati could have drawn a landlord from any other segment, but deliberately to highlight the effect and gather the ultimate impact of the message, he draws the landlord from the fold of brahmins. Not only he has excelled in spinning out totally an attractive web around Nandanar drawn out of a robust imagination but the dramatic effects he has provided for are arresting. Nandanar presumably treks the distance from Adanur to Tillai as fast as he can, impelled by the sole, overbearing, emotional fervour to have the darsan of Sri Nataraja blissfully blind to the reality of the situation he would face at Tillai!

Like the innocent child without a penny running to the balloonwallah, he reaches the outskirts of the town. The inevitable reality dawns on him and he realises the depravity of his case. *Varuhalamo* is the song that flows out of a distressed heart full of pain, sorrow, anguish and dejection:

> 'I am a social discard. I've done nothing of merit to earn the blessings of God. My case is pathetic. I feel overwhelmed by the singular thought of standing beside Him, pray and sing His praise and surrender to wash off my sins. Are You not the Great Benefactor. May I come and approach You...'

The song is couched in lyric that brims at once with lavish grace and exalted humility with dignity! The man from the lowest strata and a slum - Nandanar - handles the language appropriate to an Apostle. Being an outcaste, he could not set foot inside the periphery of the town. The soulful, vibrant heart cries, laments his fate and entreats like a beaten child to its fond mother. The sublimity of his devotion and longing pours out pathos in that brief, crisp, soul-stirring song *Varuhalamo* - May I come! Musical Bharati makes his Nandanar well-versed in music and dance. (Of course, music is second nature to Tamilians.) Here, Nandanar seeks permission to approach, sing and dance - *pāḍavum, koṇḍāḍavum!* This is not a far-fetched child of Bharati's imagination. The harijans, of course, had lacked social and religious privileges but never lagged behind in music and dance. **What they sang and danced a hundred years back for less than a paisa, stars sing and dance in cinemas for lakhs of rupees now!** Nandanar approaches the Greatest Artiste in Cosmos and surely, it is fit and proper to indicate his own qualifications too apart from devotion. Nandanar thus is made to indicate that he knows the arts in that

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Lord's own faculty! **(Bharati! In any other land, they would have elevated you to the highest pedastal. I prayed fervently in writing to the Government to put up a plaque at the place where you spent your devout years. It has fallen on deaf years!)**

'Ariya Pulayar mūvar padam aḍaindār
enrē purāṇam parindu s'olla kēttom' — in *Sabhāpatikku (Abhogi)*
'En s'ādiyāna mūvarkku pērinbam
aḷitta Tillai' —in *Piravāda muttiyai tārum (Arabhi)*

In these songs, Bharati's Nandanar refers to three men of his tribe being blest with salvation. Who are they? Sage Upamanyar in the *Nandanār Caritram* identifies the three as—

Tillai Vettiyān,
Petrān Sambhān and
Adanur Nandan Sambhān alias Tirunālai Pōvār.

Puranas, etc. abound with cases of such innocent people doing their destined jobs as *karma yogis* attaining salvation through undiluted *bhakti* and *bhakti* alone!

* * * * *

I had occasion to see this song portrayed in *bharatanatyam* by the eminent Nrtya Chudamani, V.P. Dhananjayan. The pregnant pathos of the song was, and perhaps could only be, brought out by him in all its soulful eloquent intensity. It was a magnificent, matchless presentation. Bharati once wondered whether his opera was so grandly conceived when he attended the kālaks'ēpam of Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar (1841-1903) and praises were showered on him unaware of his presence. How would he be delighted to see Dhananjayan's exquisite and spirited portrayal of Nandanar were he to see it! **Dhananjayan really brings Nandanar back to life before the audience and surely he excels.** The *bhakti bhāva* he beams out when the musicians sing the passage *Parama kṛpānidhi allavo,* the sense of unconsolable vexation he brings forth while they sing *Bhūmiyil Pulayanāi pirandēne* or *puṇṇiyam s'eyyamal* irundēnē and the absolute sense of total surrender he depicts *(s'araṇ aḍaindēnē)* are mesmerising; and in the *bhāva-rasa*-soaked *abhinaya* for each and every passage, the rasika drinks deep the *rasa* that flows out of his *bhava*-rich bharatanatya. Imperceptibly many could be seen wiping off the unsolicited tears gushing out of their eyes. He has the blessing of good personality

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and intellectual grasp of the nuances and finer aspects of the art. If Bharati was Nandanar-incarnate bringing out the opera, Dhananjayan is the *alter ego* of Nandanar!

* * *

Dhananjayan along with his able dancer-wife Shanta came out of the Shantiniketan of the South, the Kalakshetra of Adyar. Brief details on him:

Born at: Payyanur, Kerala on April 30, 1939.
Father: A. Rama Poduval
Qualification: Bachelor of Arts
Diploma with distinction in Dance.
Post-graduate diploma with distinction in Dance.
Had training under the celebrated Dr. Rukmini Arundale & Chandu Panikkar.
Founded Bharata Kalanjali
Published 'A Dancer on Dance' and many articles.

Dhananjayan is associated in diverse capacities with—

International Dance Alliance Advisory Board
Association of Bharatanatyam Artistes of India
Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram, Madras;
Central Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi.

He has participated in scores of festivals in and out of India (Singapore, Germany, East European countries, USSR, U.S.A., etc.)

Awards: UNESCO Medallion de merit (Paris), Natya Ratnam, Nrtyavila Award from Sursingar Samsad, Kalaimamani from Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram, Madras Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi - Award
Fellowship from Sangit Nataka Academy, Kerala and many others.

His life-partner, Shanta Dhananjayan, is equally capable, popular and dynamic.

Warming up

A Misconception

It is ridiculous to state that the artiste takes sometime to warm up.
It is the audience which takes time to warm up!

— Veena Chitti Babu in *BSS Souvenir,* 1968.

This is indeed an issue for research.

* * *

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PART II-C

Principle is Principle!

He presented Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, Devakottai Narayana Ayyangar and others as disciples to perpetuate *sangita* and *paramparya*. Unless his purse was emply, he would not accept concerts! *A Garland* (page 263) records that when a party pestered him to take a concert, or at least play a song, he accepted the latter. The host fondly expected of him to continue having invoked Lord Ganesa. But he forgot that **Gottuvadyam Sakharama Rao** (d. 1930) was made of sterner stuff. The maestro came, played on his instrument the invocation song *Vātāpi Gaṇapatim (Hamsadhwani),* kept up his plighted word and walked out like a realised soul!

— M.N.R.

In the forties, there was a concert of **Dr.M.S. Subbulakshmi** at a wedding reception in Coimbatore at the instance of the super comedian N.S. Krishnan. The affluent party had arranged to tape-record the concert! Sadasivam, the great-hearted spouse of the Queen of Melody, objected to it as only a concert had been agreed to. The party threatened him with dire consequences. Sadasivam did not choose to give way. He told the Queen to stop the concert and both walked out. The lawyer notice sent by the party was met by a stiff reply. There it ended!

— Source: *Kuṟaiyonṟum Illai - A Life of Fulfilment.*

* * *

Charismatic Charity

Dr.M.S. Subbulakshmi and her spouse T. Sadasivam lead unique lives. Crores have come their way and crores have they donated in charity. They may not be very rich in terms of wealth now in consequence but there is not a single heart which does not swell up to bless them nor a mind that does not direct the hands to fold up and the mouth to utter in humility *'namaskars'* to them with a smile. That smile conforms to Tiruvalluvar's couplet:

'The smile that plays on the surface of the face is not smile;
Only the smile that illumines the soul is smile.'

* * * *

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A

S. ALAMELU
S. PUSHPA
(TIRUKKOILUR SISTERS)
(DEVOTIONAL MUSIC SINGERS)
(b. 1928)
(b. 1936)

Parents : V. Subramania Dikshitar and Saraswati Ammal

Titles : Bharata Sangita Kalaivanigal
Kalaimamani from Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram in 1995

Father was a disciple of Kanchipuram Naina Pillai, the celebrated laya-oriented vidwan. The sisters had their training in music with their father and in bharatanatyam with the famous Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai. Pushpa had won the first prize in the tests conducted by All India Radio for the President's Medal. The sisters have sung at sabhas, radio and had provided background music for films.

Disc recordings too.

* * *

A.V. ANAND - MRIDANGIST: (b. April 16, 1936)

Place of birth : Hassan (Karnataka)

Parents : A. Venkatachar and Nagamma

Debut : At the age of nine

Concert tours : USA, UK, Malaysia and Singapore

Publications : Text book on Mridangam for Junior Examination.

Title : Laya Kala Nipuna by Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore.

A.V. Anand is among the top percussionists of Karnataka. Recognising his inclination and aptitude, his father, who could handle mridangam himself, placed Anand when he was six years old under the tutelage of the prominent ghatam maestro, K.S. Manjunathan. Anand was blest with the opportunity to provide accompaniment to the violin maestro, Sangita Kalanidhi T. Chowdiah at the age of twelve itself. He has since been providing accompaniment to top musicians on All India Radio, Television and elsewhere.

* * *

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MANGALORE K. ANANTHRAM — SAXOPHONE ARTISTE:

(b. January 1, 1946)

Ananthram had his professional training under Kanchana Venkata Subramanya Ayyar, Nagaswaram Munivenkatappa and Nagaswaram Karkala Narayanaswami. He has been performing in Sri Venkataramana temple for two decades and giving concerts on All India Radio, sabhas, etc. in Karnataka and at Bombay and Madras.

Place of birth	:	Kokkada near Mangalore
Father & Guru	:	Dharanappa
Debut	:	Malleswaram Sangita Sabha in 1993.
Titles	:	Saxophone Samrat by H.H. Sri Keshavananda Swamiji of Ednir Mutt (1994)
		Saxophone Sarvabhouma by Sri Lakshminarayana Asrama of Sri Durga Parameswari Temple (1994)

Puthur Venkatappa Dogra, Saxophonist, was a rage. Ananthram adapted it. Ananthram figures in some cassettes too.

* * *

H.S. ANASUYA KULKARNI — VOCALIST: (b. May 10, 1936)

Place of birth	:	Mysore
Parents	:	H.P. Surya Narayana Rao and H.S. Ambamma, a disciple of T. Gururajappa
Academic Qualifications	:	Bachelor of Arts & Proficiency Examination in vocal music.
Music Training	:	Ganakala Ratna R.R. Keshavamurti & Sangita Kalanidhi T. Chowdiah. Ustad Mohammed Hussain Sarahang of Kabul in Hindustani music.

Anasuya has been having a hectic international appearance; she has taught in universities abroad under exchange programmes and has had the benefit of Cross-cultural Music Exchange with distinguished professors of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Uganda and Ethiopia. Has taken radio and television programmes in many countries. Her husband, Narayan Kulkarni retired as Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP having served in many countries including the countries mentioned above.

Anasuya has been giving concerts for All India Radio since 1952 and lecture demonstrations at the Music Academy, Madras and other centres in and out of India. Has given benefit performances. Has published articles.

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Concerts abroad : Afghanistan, Mongolia, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Canada, U.K., USA. — Quite a formidable list indeed!

Has given cassette recordings of devotionals and music on the 'Angklung', an Indonesian musical instrument in bamboo.

Titles : Ganabhushana by Seremban Negri Sembilan Ceylonese Association of Malaysia in 1960

Ganakala Ratna by Lalitha Kala Mandira, Bangalore in 1984.

The career and achievements of Anasuya are fine illustrations of the universal appeal of music which neither barriers of language nor political frontiers restrain. She deserves to be congratulated for her relentless pursuit of music in the context of music systems that prevail in countries which her husband had to visit for UNDP work.

* * *

KALYANAPURAM R. ARAVAMUDAN—MUSICAL DISCOURSER: (b. 1936)

Parents : Ranganatha Ayyangar and Sengammal

Qualification : B.Com.

Training with : Embar Vijayaraghavachariar, the celebrated Kalakshepa maestro

Aravamudan left his employment, entered the field of musical discourse and has been giving musical discourses for Doordarshan, All India Radio, etc.

A linguist, he has been honoured with the titles of:

Pravachana Pravina Kulasekharāmrtavarsi,
Bhakti Pravachana Peroli, Sangita Upanyasa Tilakam,
Harikatharatnam and Harikathasudhanidhi.

Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram honoured him with the title of Kalaimamani in 1995.

* * *

SĒRAI AṚIVĀNAR - PRIMAL TAMIL MUSICOLOGIST:

(Between 2nd & 9th centuries A.D.)

Native place : Sētrur or Seithur in Pandia Nadu (South-South India)

Name of the work authored : *Ayntogai* or *Panchamarabu*

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Presumed occupation	:	Teacher, Adiyarkkunallar describes him as 'Panchamarabudaiya Aṟivanār' - the teacher. (Adiyarkkunallar belonged to the 12th century.)
Eminence of the work	:	Adiyarkkunallar cites *Panchamarabu* as one of the five works he depended upon in writing his commentary on *Silappadikāram* (c. 5th century A.D.) *Śilappadikāram* itself, (it is so contended), draws on *Panchamarabu* in 35 places, which shows how this ancient tamil treatise - Isai Tamil work - had perfected musicology long before the Christian era. It is, however, a matter for intensive research as indicated at the end herein.

"Without *Panchamarabu,* there would be no musicology in *Śilappadikāram.* Without *Śilappadikāram,* there would be no tamil musicology (*tamiliśai ilakkaṇam*)"

— Dr. V.P.K. Sundaram

How *Panchamarabu* came to light	:	'Venerable Dr.U.Ve.Swaminatha Ayyar, rightly hailed as the Father of Tamil Research and Grand Old Man of Tamil Literature, spent his entire life-time in unearthing tamil works like Sangham works and the Five Great Tamil Epics. But *Panchamarabu* could not be got at. Elumathur Velampalayam Vidwan V.R. Deivasikhamani Goundar finally got the manuscript. It was brought to print in 1973 which roused a sense of intense awakening and urge for research. Kudandai P. Sundaresanar did yeoman work in getting the work published when I took over the task of publishing it. Dr.V.P.K. Sundaram undertook the task of bringing out a comprehensive commentary. It came to be published in 1991." —Dr. N. Mahalingam
What does the work deal with?		Vocal music, stringed and blow instruments, dance-drama and tala traditions and theory. The first three are together called the 'Triple Music' *(muvisai).*

Panchamarabu comprised 240 *'veṇbas'* (verse forms), of which only 191 have been traced along with 12 which are alleged by Dr. Sundaram as interpolations. The author, with immense grace, has stated that the work deals with music of Lord Viṣnu (vocal and instrumental), dance of Lord Siva (Koothan or Vārśadayon) and tala expounded by Brhma. Thus he brings in the Trinity dedicating the individual segments to each one of them. 'I, an innocent person, have taken up the task of writing this work in the hope that men of wisdom would not treat it with disdain', says Aṟivanār. He clarifies that the work is to ensure the survival and growth of musical traditions including *abhinaya.*

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Merit of the work:

Panchamarabu is a remarkable work that deals with individual sections and aspects of musicology, danseology, etc. with pregnant clarity born of profound wisdom, intensive study and penetrating experience. The classifications are astonishingly precise, modern and well-conceived. When one looks at the sculpture of Sri Minakshi Kalyanam at the sannidhi of Lord Sundareswara in the temple at Madurai, he wonders whether the sculptor had just then left the work having given finishing touches for the salvation of man and art. It is so fresh after centuries! Even so, *Panchamarabu* strikes one as if Aṟivanār had completed the work just a few decades before! Surely he was a musician and musicologist *par excellence.* Frequently a doubt arises whether the work relates to later times but it is said that it was the basis for *Śilappadikāram.* Vide remarks at the end. The author of the work was a wizard, an intellectual seer and man of vision. When Valmiki wrote on the different regions and even Sri Lanka, it does not mean that he had trekked the country and had seen it through. Sages and seers are blest with, acquire and develop exceptional enlightenment, insight and foresight that they could live in the past, present and the future. Aṟivanār is certainly one among such souls of immortality. One or two points are cited here though he covers the entire gamut of music and musicology and this is not the forum to bring them all in.

Ālapana:

'Makarattin oṟṟāl sruti viravum
Pagaril kuriṉedil pārittu - nigarillā
Tennā tenāveṉṟu paḍuvarēl ālatti;
Mannā icchollin vagai.' *So, it proceeds....*

Thirteen letters - long and short vowels and consonants - are used. The short letters (called *Acchu Ālatti*) are of one *mātra* - unit time. The long have two *mātras.* To delineate raga with long vowels, it is *Pāranai.* To sing using ma, na, da is *'tanaṁ, tānaṁ, ṁtānamamtānam, naṁtānaṁ,* etc.' It is like *tadarinana,* etc., which is in vogue now. So, centuries back, the mode of delineation of raga had been very much the same as is in force now.

Eleven criteria govern the *ālāpana* like—

muka ālatti	-	*jiva swara* (s);
murai	-	step by step delineation on ascending and descending notes and in different *kalas* ;
muḍivu	-	interim endings to produce effects and joy;
niraivu	-	comprehensive *(pūṛṇatvam)* delineation;

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kuṟaivu	-	short and abrupt ending;
valivu	-	timbre;
kiḷamai	-	inter-relation of notes;
varaiyaṟai	-	adherence to musicology - *arohana, avarohana,* etc. and
nīrmai	-	*bhava, rasa, swarupa* of each raga.

There are similar guidelines for *tānam.* It is said that the old *chandam* practice prevails even now during transplantation of crops, piccotah-operation, etc., when they sing in two batches —

tannāne tannāne, etc. I
tānene tānene, etc. II adhering to tala beats.

There are such guidelines, etc. for each segment of music.

How the names of *paṇs* (ragas) were coined, one may be interested to know. Here it is from *Panchamarabu:*

'Paṇbāl kiriyaiyāl pāvāl nilattāl
munbāga niṉṟilaṅgum ōsaiyinai...'

Names are given on the basis of quality of conduct, action or deed, category of song or the terrain of land.

Paṇ is absolute music (raga) while *iśai* is *paṇ* plus lyric.

'Pāvoḍinaittal iśai eṉṟār paṇ eṉṟa ..'

As the raga merges with the lyric, it becomes *iśai* drawn from the verb *iśaindu.*

Ten qualities of *pāḍal* (song) for appreciation are:

Pāvaridal	-	category of song - kriti, kirtan, etc. ;
Pattāḷam	-	tala for the song;
Puṇarppu	-	appropriateness of lyric, tune and mode of rendition;
poruḷ	-	meaning to enable full grasp of the song;
niṟam	-	emotion - *vira, santam,* disdain, joy, sorrow, compassion, etc.;
paṇ	-	full implication of raga and its *swarūpa;*
kālam	-	appropriateness of raga, etc, to the time of renditon;
kēṭpōr	-	standard of audience, rasikas for whom the songs are sung;
tannilai	-	merit and capability of the singer himself to adopt appropriate style;
idanilai	-	place of rendition - temple, community hall, etc.

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All these are beautifully brought out in the verse *'Paṇṇiya Pāṭṭālam...'* (There is one phrase in this viz., *'Paṇṇōdu rāgam aṛidal'.* How the word *'ragam'* came to find a place here in a work allegedly of second century is intriguing. Is it also an interpolation? Dr. Sundaram declines to accept the view that the work relates to the 9th century or so. Twelve verses are excluded by him on the plea of interpolations since they do not accord with his theory that the work relates to pre-*Śilappadikāram* period. Can such a stand be hailed as fair? Since there are references to 'Mannan Tirumara', 'Maduraiyar Kōvē', etc., he asserts that the work relates to *Śilappadikāram* era. Did the latter work draw inspiration from *Panchamarabu* or the reverse and whether the work could relate to the period of post-*Śilappadikāram* and pre-Adiyarkkunallar is for research. **Perhaps it should be so since the work would seem to reflect the accumulated wisdom of later days. Prof. Arunachalam has opined that the work should relate to 9th century as the *paṇ Śālarapaṇi* mentioned in it does not find place in *Tevaram.* T.A. Thanapandian too views so. To avoid this interesting biographical sketch out-reaching itself here, one may usefully refer to *Panchamarabu* edited by Dr. V.P.K. Sundaram sponsored by Dr. N. Mahalingam and published by Tirunelveli South Indian Saiva Siddhanta Publications Corporation. This offers rich scope for research.**

* * *

ARUNDHATI SARCAR — VOCALIST: (b. June 16, 1937)

Place of birth	:	Cuddapah (A.P.)
Parents	:	J.V. Thimmaji Rao and Ramaseshamma
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts.
Training in music under	:	Parupalli Ramakrishnayya Pantulu, the illustrious musician of yester years.
		Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao, a very competent musician-musicologist of standing — for six years.
		T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar in Dikshitar kritis and D.K. Pattammal
Debut	:	In her eleventh year at Vijayawada and for All India Radio in the next year.

Arundhati Sarcar is a mature musician providing rich classical rendition in the strict orthodox style. Has a good appealing voice; her rendition and style are absorbing; has special inclination to invoke the majestic *vilambakala* compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar, a virtue she ought to have imbibed from the veteran teachers she had as gurus. She has been giving concerts for All

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India Radio, Doordarshan and sabhas. She has presented special musical features on different themes for Radio and Doordarshan. There is *soukhyam* in her musical rendition. Visakhapatnam has had a good musical past and Arundhati Sarcar is among those who grace the musical scene there now.

* * *

Ghatam and its constraints

'Like flute, the pitch or *sruti* of ghatam cannot be changed. Though the *sruti* matches with the main artiste in the beginning, it may change due to climatic and other conditions. If the pitch is slightly on the higher side, we can somehow manage. But nothing can be done if the pitch is lower. On such situations, the thumb should not be used much as *nadam* emanates only from that!'

— T.H. Vinayakaram, Ghatam maestro.

Ghatam up & Kanjira down - why?

Kanjira which was popular with artistes and rasikas is slowly disappearing from concert dais while ghatam is steadily building up as principal *upavadya* (ancillary percussive instrument). The reasons need an in-depth probe. Apparently, it is true that the kanjira artiste has one hand immobilised to hold the instrument for the other hand to play. So what the mridangam/ghatam player does with both the hands, he has to bring out with a single hand. Dr. N. Somanathan, CLRI, Madras writes,

> 'Though kanjira is superior in construction, we cannot make any more kanjiras since the processing of varanus (varanus skin produces rich sound, that too when played soft) and other reptile skins is totally banned by Government of India and one has to search for alternatives. Kanjiras made with bandicoot skin is of the same standard as one with varanus skin and offer a good substitute.'

Perhaps this is another reason. Kanjira has presented stalwarts like Manpoondia Pillai, the pioneer, Dakshinamurti Pillai, Palani Subramania Pillai, Madras Venu Naicker. H.P. Ramachar, Sosale Seshagiridas, Nagaraja Rao, Harishankar and a few others.

* * * * *

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AVVAIYAR — A CELEBRITY IN MUSIC & DANCE:
(c. Ist and 12th century A.D.)

Vedic and Puranic lore highlight the advent of many women of renown, scholarship and didactic pre-eminence like Viswavarai, Lopamudra, Vakdevi, Kośa, Abala, Maitreyi, Gargi and Devahuti. To this distinguished galaxy belongs the fragrant flower and crest-jewel of Tamil Culture, Avvaiyar. She is the most well-known saint-poet around whom a rich crop of literature and legends, anecdotes and pithy moral sayings have grown up to the eternal glory of culture, polity, religion and morality. The Paramacharya of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal placed Avvaiyar on the highest pedastal of unique glory and rare distinction when he equated *'Avvai vākku'* (sayings of Avvai) with *Vēda Vākku* or *Satya Vākku.* Patriot-poet Subramania Bharati extols Avvai's teachings as divine nectar.

Two issues, however, crop up in dealing with the life of the Grand Dame of Tamils. One is whether there were a plurality of great women bearing the same name at different times and the other is whether she was a celebrity in music and dance also. In common parlance, people rarely entertain any thought of there having been more than one Avvaiyar. But men of erudition who have delved deep into the issue have averred that there were at least two and perhaps four or even six.

More often the passionate mind declines to reconcile itself to truths, well-sustained truths and treats them as bitter unacceptables merely because the earlier understanding happened to be sweeter and lustrous. That different composers taking to the same *mudra* or signature has caused confusion is well known. Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan says, 'Viswamitra, the benefactor of Triśaṅku in apposition to Vasiṣtha, Viswamitra of the time of Harischandra and Sunaḥśena and Viswamitra, the contemporary of Dasaratha Rama were quite different personalities but Puranic traditions roll them all into one'. There have been similar cases in respect of Naradas, Bharatas, Kapilars, etc. K. Arunachalam says that apart from Avvaiyar I and II dealt with herein, there were four more in the 10th, 14th, 16th and 17-18th centuries. But Prof. T. Muthu Kannappar in his *Avvaiyar Vāzhvum Vākkum,* has sought, perhaps not convincingly, to project a new, fresh, fascinating theory to cut the Gordian knot of different poetesses adopting the same name. D. Gnanasundaram writes on this version thus:

> 'After considering the opinion of the scholars of the past like Anavaradam Pillai, Karmegha Konar and others, Prof. T. Muthu

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Kannappar subscribes to their opinion that there was only **one poetess who had lived for more than twelve centuries** starting from the days of Tiruvalluvar to that of Ottakuttar. (This long span of life was possible because she had taken the unique Indian gooseberry from Kanchamalai offered affectionately by her patron Adhiyaman and she had also practised *kundalini yoga*.) **It is doubtful that the world of research will accept this which borders on impossibility.'**

* * *

Avvaiyar I is placed in the 1st or the 2nd century A.D. Fifty-nine poems comprising —

4 in *Aganānūru*	15 in *Kuruntogai*
7 in *Narrinai* and	33 in *Puranānuru* - all taken to *Ettuttogai.*

are the available verses now which are attributed to the tamil madonna. The verses enjoy virility and merit but their music is not known. She is credited with such nonchalant statements like,

'Wherever I go, food awaits me there...
I take back my kit of instruments.
Tell your master so.'

The outburst was the fiery expression of 'Madam Self-respect' when the ruling chief failed to respond with honour in time. It was the proud claim and demand of poets of eminence to be respected and given honourable reception since a poet has the world before him while the ruler is non-descript outside the boundaries of his territory. (Whatever was the reality, this profound dictum and declaration are proudly presented in tamil literature as it was they who wielded the pen!)

Avvaiyar II, placed in the 12th century A.D., has left a rich, effulgent legacy in—

Atticchūdi	*Mūdurai* and
Konrai Vēndan	*Nalvali.*

These are all treasures of wisdom, codes of morality of eternal application and relevance, spiritual sayings and undying springs of ever-lasting inspiration to humanity.

There were probably one or two more of the same name. While the works of fabulous merit have stood like rock against the ravages and vandalism of man,

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time and nature, the actual lives of the authors are clouded in legends, myths, anecdotes but in unique faith in the existence of such a person right through centuries. Whatever is said about their lives is said of 'the Avvaiyar' and not of Avvaiyar I or II, etc. The same story applies *in extenso* since plurality has never been thought of and rarely countenanced! The common view of popular appeal is that

> Avvaiyar was the daughter of Bhagawan, a brahmin and
> Adhi, a woman belonging to Pulayas and that
>
> Avvaiyar's brothers included Tiruvalluvar, the celestial author of the work
> *Tirukkural,* hailed as *Tamil Vēda* and
> Kapilar, hailed as Poets' Poet and as author of *Kapilar Agaval.*

The word 'Avvai' itself connotes mother, respectable senior lady or matron which could have been attached to any lady of distinction. It may not have been the baptismal name, though it could not also be ruled out. Nātātanār in *Śirupaṇarṟupaḍai* and Kapilar in *Kapilar Agaval* refer to her only as Avvai. It is said that these references would be applicable to Avvaiyar II; it has been gratuitously and vaguely assumed that paternal and other details are applicable to both! (Of course, it is not peculiar that what was once a proper name becomes a common name later.)

Kapilar Agaval avers that the impressionable youth of Avvai was at the musical home of a Pāṇar:

> *'Narambukkaruviyōr Nanniḍu chēriyil*
> *Pāṇar agattinil Avvai vaḷaradanaḷ.'*

Panars were a musical sect and mostly instrumentalists. There is mention that Avvai underwent training in music as was common to that sect. It is relevant to mention here that according to V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *'Kapilar Agaval'* is clearly a spurious work of very much later times...There is nothing to corroborate the version that Tiruvalluvar and Avvaiyar were brother and sister! It is also a matter for conjecture whether the names of parents, Bhagawan and Adhi, have been gratuitously taken from the invocation verse in *Tirukkural.*

Vāgīśa Munivar's *Jñānāmṛtam* (c. 15th century A.D.) applies the significant appellation *'Innisai Eḷuvar'* - the melodic seven while describing Avvaiyar and her brothers and sisters - as if the *Sapta Swaras* in all their divine charm entered the home of Bhagawan and found warmth in the receptive womb of Adhi to bring forth the matchless seven! Nothing is improbable since honeyed divine grace in its lavish abundance and abandon could have blessed the so-called

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Bhagawan-Adhi couple with the galaxy of children though the marriage of sorts was strange. Luck, says the tamil adage, when it strikes, rips open even the ceiling to bestow its grace! Perhaps this could have been one such blessing but could Tiruvalluvar and Avvai be placed in the 12th century? There is inherent incongruity. There is much to doubt the uncorroborated references to parentage and the off-springs. But the fact remains that Avvai was a reality and her works are the precious legacy of the tamils!

Avvai is invariably described as a vibrant moralist; and in yester decades, her works were profusely used for the education of children and they did have profound effect. The tamil areas were proud to enjoy a high moral standard then. Here is a resplendent example of Avvaiyar:

> *Kuḷavi pirappinum ... ...*
> *Toḍarpaḍu ṅjamaliyin iḍaṛpaduttu īriya*
> *ulagattānē.* (*Puranānūru* 74)

> (The Chief is not annihilated in battle by the sword; but is chained and dragged like a dog. If, then, he is not able to stifle his hunger and thirst but seeks the help of his enemies! At the very thought, the Chief thunders, 'Will royalty bring forth such a degraded and decrepit man who would seek for such a favour rather than end his life?')

This is the tenor of many of her output full of majestic grace, laudable dignity, high morality, etc and impressionable minds of children were suckled with such succulent poetry and songs in yester decades. The vibrant moralist is also seen as diplomat, poet and divine ambassador of peace who scattered love and solicitude, morality and wisdom during her constant peregrinations.

But quite strangely her musical and dance expertise and eminence have failed to catch the imagination of scholars and the public. Her artistic skills have rarely been noticed and highlighted. The musical Pāṇars have presented successive waves of eminent musicians including the apostles, Tiruppānāzhvār and Tirunīlakaṇṭa Yāzhpāṇar, the constant instrumental accompanist to Tirugnānasambandar and hero of *Yāzhmuripaṇ*. Again, it was a Pāṇar lady (Pādiniar) who set *Tēvaram* to tune when with the help of Nambiyandar Nambi, Raja Raja Cholan unearthed the secreted *Tēvaram. Kapilar Agaval,* to whatever period it relates, describes them as instrumentalists. Avvai grew up at one of such musical homes. (It was presumably because of the affluence of music and literature, the proverb 'When there is no food for the ear, food for belly shall be given' had come into vogue.) Bharata's *Nātya Śāstra* and *Iḷango's Śilappadikāram* had seen music and dance as inseparable twins.

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Avvaiyar calls herself a *'Virali'*, which according to Dr.V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, is a female singer versed in the art of bringing out the underlying emotions and feelings conveyed in a song by appropriate gestures - *abhinaya*. *Śilappadikāram* too mentions that a five-year old girl has to take up training in dance and get a diploma by the twelfth year!

The expertise of Avvai is seen in her remarkable allusions to music in her lavish writings. Heredity and environment added to her innate artistic talents, should have surely shaped her into a musician. Panar and yazh were like the word and its meaning. In fact, V.S. Gomatisankarayyar opines that 'yazh' denoted *swara, nāda, iśai* (music) or musical instrument as context demands (*JMAM,* 1993). This is in conformity with Sarñga Deva's definition that vocal, instrumental music and dance constitute music - *'Gìtam...Ucyatē'*. Panars are also classified into Iśai panars (vocalists), yazh panars (instrumentalists) and mandai panars (Peri yazh panars). Nallazhiciyar refers to the sweet strains of panar yazh, flute, etc. thus:

"Oru tiram, pāṇar yāzhin tingural ezha,
Oru tiram, pāṇar vaṇḍin imizhiśai ezha.'

Avvaiyar had floated like a bedecked boat in an ocean of art on moonlit days. Her amaranthine writings substantiate this as in-

'Śentāmaraip pūmpāda *Śilambu pala iśaip pāḍa..'*	The anklet of Thy lotus feet spreads wafts of tunes.
'Pālum telitēnum..Sanghat *Tamiḻ mūṇṛum tā.'*	I shall offer you *payasya..* Grant me expertise in literature, music and drama. (Such a prayer could not but be the outpouring of a passionate, committed musical soul, which Avvaiyar was.)
'Sevittunj Śeṇṛiraṇḍu... *Pāttiśaittu...'*	In the throes of hunger, man has no qualms in stooping to sing for a coin! (Here, the need for dignity of a musician is highlighted.)
'Yazhodum kollār *Pudalvartam maḻalai.'*	The prattle of one's own child confers greater joy than the sweet strains of yazh.

Of course, these would seem to relate to Avvaiyar II. Was she but a rebirth of the Great Madonna of a millennium earlier? Soul is immortal, it is said!

What is clear is that the effulgent symbol of ancient Tamil glory, Avvaiyar was a resplendent specimen of Sarngadeva's definition of *Sangita* and was a sure celebrity in Music and Dance.

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B

BHOOMA KRISHNASWAMI — VOCALIST & TEACHER : (b. April 13, 1926)

There is is a perpetual flow of bright, musical faces of diverse hues swarming like musical bees at her home whether it be morning or evening. There are continuous lessons in *swarāvaḷi, varnam* or *kriti* and the house hums with musical tones round the clock. That is the home of Bhooma Krishnaswami, daughter of connoisseur in music and advocate, Mylapore Aravamuda Iyengar. Bhooma had her training from the age of six successively under—

Mylapore Gowri Ammal for about two years
Nagaswaram Chinnaswami Pillai (1934 - 42)
Melacauvery Ramamurti Ayyar
Lalgudi Halasyam Ayyar
Mayuram Viswanatha Sastriar
D.K. Jayaraman
Muthukrishnan in songs of Oothukadu Bard and
Mani in songs of his (Mani's) father, Kotiswara Ayyar.

An impressive record of training, indeed! Bhooma Krishnaswami had passed examinations in music and hindi and is conversant with many languages.

Debut: Ranade Hall, Mylapore in September, 1940 and at
South India Club, New Delhi in 1941.

Bhooma treasures her singing *Bharat Bhajans* of Mayuram Viswanatha Sastriar at Rajaji Hall, Madras on the occasion of felicitating Rajaji on his appointment as Governor-General of India in 1947. She has given concerts at various centres and on All India Radio. Her special emphasis on *bhakti bhava* and *artha bhava* and her melodious voice enriched her concerts. Later years see her imparting musical training to scores of musical children.

C

B.S. CHANDRAKALA — VIOLINIST/VOCALIST: (b. March 21, 1931)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Parents	:	G.R. Siddahappa, a vocalist & Bhadramma.
General Qualification	:	Intermediate and Visharada (Hindi)
Training in music under	:	Bagiluru Krishnamurti Chintanapalli Krishnamurti

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A. Subba Rao
R.R. Keshavamurti
Pallavi Chandrappa
Passed Government Vidwat pariksha.

Debut : 1956 September providing violin accompaniment to T.K. Ramamurti at Arisikere Ganeshotsava.

Posts held : Music Teacher in Corporation Girls High School & College for 28 years and retired in 1989.

Examiner for Akashvani, Music & Dance Academy & Special Music Examination Board.

Chair-person, Blind Students Text Book Committee for Music.

A multi-faceted artiste, Chandrakala has been a successful vocalist, violinist, teacher, author and harmonist with wide, varied interests. Has prepared seventy-two charts called Sangeeth Darshana for exhibition in Karnataka. Is associated with the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat and Kalavidara Gruha Nirmana Sahakara Sangha and is President, Swaralipi Pratishthana.

Publications:

Book on music for beginners - Sangita Pathagalu.
Nijaguna Swarasarita - 42 songs of old set to tunes and meaning explained.
Janapada Swarasampada (2 volumes) A collection of folk songs with their ragas and talas identified.
Jhenkari - Collection of compositions with notation.
Akkana Vacanagalu - Musical adaptation of Akka Mahadevi's Vacanas
Bhava Gitagalu - Light music songs with notation.

She has given a cassette in light music. Has received many awards and honours such as—

Sangita Ratna from Pancha Pithadhisharu
Swara Lipi Sharada from Bina Educational Institute 1991
Kalasaraswati from Tyagaraja Gana Sabha besides
'Artist of the Year', 'Best Teacher', etc. awards.

In the literary field, she has made her mark by publishing poems, novels, short stories, etc. An enlightened social worker, she has constituted a fund out of her retirement benefits to honour those in the fields of music and literature.

Raghusutha, author of *Sunadha,* states that the name of the *janya raga* of *Melakarta* 22, *Karaharapriya,* viz., Chandrakala is very appropriate to the musical multi- dimensional artiste. Before she had her regular training under the masters cited, she had initial training with Harmonium Padmavati, Avalamurtappa, and Bidadi Sembulingappa and violin under Sankarappa. When

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she married Jayadevayya, he too began to take lessons but marital bliss lasted for a bare two years when he fell a victim to an accident. The Castle of Happiness having crumbled so early and suddenly, twenty-year old Chandrakala found her solace and sustenance in music. She got herself fully equipped both in theory and practice. Teaching disciples in scores, giving lecture-demonstrations, composing songs, inventing new ragas, presenting braille system for blind musical students, freely indenting on folk songs with innovative tunes and clothing them with fragrant graces, Chandrakala has found the soul and meaning of her existence in music.

A social worker with abundant sympathy and consideration for the poor, she founded the trust 'Swaralipi' in 1994 and is associated with many associations - musical and social - including the Tyagaraja Gana Sabha of which she was President too.

Quite early in life, misfortune marred her life but with will and fortitude, she has proved that she was destined to rise up to prominence and play a role!

* * *

CHANDRASING - VOCALIST: (b. 1921)

Chandrasing, a Rajput born at Madras, settled at Mysore. Having lost his parents while yet young (when average age of man was also low), Chandrasing joined a dramatic company learning music from whomsoever he could indent on like Jayarama Sarma, Somasundara Mudaliar, Srinivasachar, Swaminatha Pillai, etc.

His first appearance on the stage was in 1935. In the same year, he gave a concert for the Corporation Radio at Madras. Went to Pudukottai when Madras was under a massive spell of evacuation due to the advancing Japanese invasion in the Second World War and was bombarded. He helped Dandapani Desikar, the eminent Tamil Isai maestro and began teaching music on return to Madras. He was giving performances. For sometime, he was giving concerts jointly with Pallavi Chandrappa.

He was noted for his *kalpanaswara* which was lauded by many. He had demonstrated delineating *pallavis* in difficult talas like *Simhanandana* and *Sarabhanandana* as well as in *Pakshāntara-bṛhma tala* at the Gayana Samaja of Bangalore in 1969, 1970 and 1971. He had written many works which remain unpublished. His disciples like vocalist Sasikala and cine star, Bharati Viṣnuvaradan have distinguished themselves.

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N. CHOCKAMMA — VOCO-VAINIKA (b. September 18, 1922)

Born of Narasimha Ayyangar and Rukkammal at Bangalore as the tenth and last child, Chockamma was brought up by her loving sister and brother-in-law. A family of patriots, it found time to devote attention to arts inspired by the musical affluence of the times. Chockamma had her training in music successively with—

Dharwad Virupaksha Sastri, voco-violinist who took her as disciple voluntarily noticing the girl's aptitude for music and her sweet voice.
Swaramurti V.N. Rao, Violinist Devappa, Puttaswamayya and Titte Krishnayyangar.

She had special training in music and *laya* under D. Seshappa and wound up her training in Carnatic Classical with Mysore Vasudevacharya. She had training in Hindustani music also and passed the Karnataka Government Vidwan Course. Well-versed in four languages, she has specialised in *Devaranamas.* With her marriage ending in divorce, what the domestic scene lost was a massive gain to the musical field to which her entire attention came to be devoted.

With D. Seshappa on mridangam, Chockamma opened up her career with a concert in her sixteenth year. She enjoys a golden voice; her handling of the lyric is perfect; like Dhanammal and some others, she sings while playing on veena. When Mysore Akashvani (radio) was inaugurated in 1938, she was chosen to give the concert. Once some foreigners who attended her concert after congratulating her, emptied their purses before her as their token gift. She has been granted a government pension.

Honours & Titles :

Mysore Maharaja presented a 'thoda' for her concert at the Dusserah festival.
Swara Kinnari by Malladihalli Swamy.
Vina Vadana Catura by All India Sadhu Sammelan
Award from Karnataka Government during Rajyotsava Festival
Swara Bhushani by Swara Lipi Pratishthana, Bangalore in 1994.
Ganakala Bhushana by Karnataka Ganakala Parishat in 1996

D

SALEM G. DESIKAN — VOCO-VAINIKA: (July 7, 1926 - March 18, 1986)

Father : D. Gopalachar, Advocate, Salem, a patriot who relinquished his practice to support national struggle.

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School education	:	S.S.L.C.
Musical training under	:	Sister Lakshmi, a disciple of Salem Doraiswami Ayyangar
Debut	:	At Devakottai in his twelfth year.

Desikan had made intensive study of the music and styles of eminent vidwans of Carnatic and Hindustani music and was practically a self-made vidwan having moulded his vidwat by sheer observation and dedicated practice. His voice was melodious, attractive and praise-worthy. His services were availed of by Annamalai University to tune songs in tamil as part of the efforts to popularise Tamil Isai. He was a great admirer of the styles of eminent vocalists of the time and of the Nagaswara maestro, T.N. Rajarathinam and inspired by them, used to bring out flashes of their styles at his concerts, which exuded *lakshaṇa* and *lakshya* graces.

Desikan founded the Sangita Samrakshana Sabha, Salem along with his friends. He had trained many including Jayalakshmi Ramachandran, Neela and Eachangudi N. Ramamurti Bhagavatar. He had given a large number of concerts (vocal and veena) for All India Radio and sabhas. Padma Desikan, his wife, is a veena player. Desikan was also manufacturing veenas according to specifications.

Concert tour	:	Russia
Titles & Honours	:	Gāna Kalā Chandra by Tiger Varadachariar. Gāna Kalā Paripurna by T.N. Rajarathinam Sangīta Sāmrāt at Bangalore

E

T. EKAMBARAM — MULTI-FACETED PERFORMER: (c. 1919-1995)

A restless soul, ever after achieving something concrete and postitive, T. Ekambaram was a devotee of Gandhiji,—

true follower of his constructive programmes,
founder and teacher, Varadarajapuram Harijan Students Night School,
photographic expert,
director and treasurer, Photographic Dealers and Workers Association,
a Railway employee,
conductor of Irai Pani Mandram, Tambaram for propagation of Tiruppugal, and above all
a successful researcher into the Tala Structure of *Tiruppugal*.

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Ekambaram impelled by his research-cum-result-oriented mind, had been a constant participant in the Pan Research deliberations of Madras Tamil Isai Sangham and has done intensive research into the tala structure followed in *Tiruppugaḷ* songs of Sri Arunagirinathar. If the mathematical working sheets of Ramanujam had been eluding solution of mathematicians the world over, the tala structures adopted for *Tiruppugaḷ* had been equally baffling to musicians and musicologists. After perseverance and intensive research, Ekambaram identified the individual tala for each of the songs and had been demonstrating the same with his disciples at sabhas, etc.

Ekambaram used to refer to talas as the banks to the musical flow in the melodic river and that absence of tala is akin to food without salt. He correlated each of the songs of *Tiruppugaḷ* to one of the 108 talas recognised by authorities, each with inner variations in *druta, anudruta, laghu, guru, plutam* and *kākapādam* with varying *akṣara kalas.* Sri Vallimalai Swamigal was his inspiration and Sri Sadhuram Swamigal and Pithukuli Murugadas close advisor-collaborators.

Publication : *Nūṟṟettu Tāla Tiruppugaḷ* 1993
Parents : Thangavelu Mudaliar and Nagammal

G

CHITRAVEENA GANESH - CHITRAVEENA ARTISTE: (b. June 17, 1977)

It has been an ocean of Classical Carnatic music at home in which young Ganesh was blest to be born. The celebrated Gottuvadyam Narayana Ayyangar was his maternal grandfather. The genial Chitraveena Narasimhan is his uncle while the Chitraveena maestro Ravi Kiran is his cousin and guru. Of course, the uncle provides his benevolent umbrella as he has done to his own children, Ravi Kiran, Shashi Kiran and Kiranavali, the latter two also being performing artistes now. In this environment of performing artistes of repute, it is impossible for young Ganesh to fail to draw inspiration and establish himself as an instrumentalist of repute. He emulated his cousin in imbibing musical knowledge even as a child and has been providing accompaniment to Ravi Kiran and giving solos.

His play is marked by robust confidence and self-assurance and is pleasing and graceful. The talented young artiste has an assured successful future. He is an 'A' grade artiste with All India Radio and Doordarshan.

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Parents	:	S. Parthasarathy & Gayatri
Gurus in music	:	Ravi Kiran and T. Brinda

* * *

BOMBAY B. RANJANI
B. GAYATRI] **VIOLINISTS** [(b. May 13, 1973)
(b. May 10, 1976)

Place of birth	:	Bombay
Parents	:	N. Balasubramanian & Minakshi, a vocalist.
Academic Qualification	:	Both are graduates.

Ranjani and Gayatri are a popular duo and both provide accompaniment also to vocalists individually. They blend well and the tonal presentation is pleasant. Their delineation of ragas and swaras is crisp and well-measured. They have undergone full and complete training under Prof. T.S. Krishnaswami of Sri Shamukhananda Sangita Vidyalaya in Bombay, a calm, unostentatious vidwan of repute who has, on retirement, gone over to Madras. Ranjani and Gayatri too have done likewise to improve their professional prospects.

Both are artistes with All India Radio and have been giving duo concerts and providing accompaniments.

The sisters are also vocalists and are now taking training under the reputed vocalist, P.S. Narayanaswamy.

* * *

GAYATRI CHANDRASEKAR - VOCALIST: (b. June 28, 1948)

Place of birth	:	Mysore
Parents	:	Dr. S.Krishnamurti and Rukmini Dr. E.S. Sankaranarayana Iyer of Kallidaikurichi, composer and musicologist was her paternal grandfather.
Academic Qualification	:	B.Sc. Diploma in Advertising & Public Relations
Posts held	:	Correspondent & Editorial Associate, *'Sruti'* - 1983-88 News Correspondent, Doordarshan, Bangalore
Musical training under	:	Kallidaikurichi Ramalinga Bhagavatar Nellai Mani, Violinist Tirunelveli Minakshisundara Bhagavatar

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Debut : Tyagaraja Aradhana, Tirunelveli in 1956

Gayatri Chandrasekhar has been giving concerts at all important centres and is now 'A' grade artiste with All India Radio. Is contributing articles and profiles to newspapers, etc.

* * *

GNĀNĀNANDA TĪRTHA — COMPOSER: (March 23, 1908 – Jany 3, 1989)

Parents	:	Sriramamurthy Sastri and Mahalakshmi
Native place	:	Dhenuvakonda, Andhra Pradesh
Name prior to adoption of the spiritual name	:	Ogirala Veeraraghava Sarma
Publications	:	Devi Ganasudha with 27 kritis and one tana varnam in 1947 (reprinted in 1986 with additions.)
Signatures (Mudras)	:	Raghava first and Gnanananda Tirtha later and also Devi Ganasudha.
Honour	:	Deviganasudhakara by Pivatla Sankara Sastri

Born in a Vedic family, Veeraraghava Sarma had his lessons in Vedas and underwent training in music with his maternal uncle, Kundurti Ramamurty Bhagavatar as well as Kandeti Anjaneya Sastri, Hari Nagabhushanam and Chitti Peddi Ramachandramurty of Madras. Sri Nadananda of Sri Kalahasti initiated him to spiritual benediction and christened him Gnānānanda Tīrtha.

'I am no lyricist nor have I any poetic flair. Whatever composition flowed from me was providential, a miracle which just occurred by Divine Grace of Devi Gayatri', said he.

He began his performing career at Madras and his composing advent commenced with the first song *Kāvave Kamalākshi (Jaganmohini).* He has composed on many important deities like Devi Gayatri, Devi Annapoorna and Kanchi Kamakshi. The song *Sadguru Charana Saroruha Bhakti (Behag)* was on his spiritual guru Sri Nadananda. His songs are soaked in pure *bhakti* and are rich in *raga bhava. Pranavapriya* and *Srinadananda Ranjani* are ragas invented by him. *Shanmukha,* Bombay records that of all the commendations received, Tirtha cherished the praise of Bangalore Nagaratnammal presumably inspired by her absolute devotion and homage to Tyagaraja!

"He was a Raja Yogi, top class Classical singer and a composer of the highest order", says Dayananda Rao.

* * *

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GOPALAKRISHNA BHAGAVATAR — BHAGAVATA MAESTRO:
(14.10.1892 - 30.04.1971)

Place of birth	:	Vallavari in Arantangi taluk
Parents	:	Sundaresayya - Minakshi Ammal
Clan	:	Andhra Uddava
Spent his early years in	:	Swarnakadu and Mannangadu in Pattukottai taluk
Training	:	Harikatha kalakṣepam under Oothukadu Venkatarama Bhagavatar and also bharatanatyam.
First performance	:	Harikatha on 'Ramadasa'.

Gopalakrishna was deeply interested and involved in *bhajan* and music from childhood and there was scope to hear and learn from experienced performers because of the then prevalent *bhakti* movement inaugurated by the Trinity of Devotional Music, Sri Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal, Sadguru Swamigal and Sridhara Venkateswara Ārya. Deeply religious and devoted to *bhajans* and music, Bhagavatar found congenial conditions in and settled at Pudukottai and came to be called after the place.

He was music teacher in Rajah's College, Pudukottai for some years. *Nāma Sañkīrtanam* claimed him as its exclusive votary. From 1920, he was celebrating to his last days Sri Lakshmi Nṛsimha Jayanti Mahotsav. The celebrations at Pudukottai drew large gathering of devotees. It was a gala festival of ten days duration with distribution of food, *bhajan,* lectures, concerts, etc. He made pilgrimages to centres of religious importance with just his books, pooja box and tambura; and his *bhajan* exposition carried him throughout the length and breadth of India. His name carried respect and his soul-stirring *bhajans* became very famous. Musicians and lay public hailed his magnificent contribution to spiritual advancement of the masses and the *bhakti* movement. Eminent musicians thought it a privilege to join his *bhajans* whether they were on the streets or at mandaps. He led a simple, religious life of purpose committed to take *nāma sañkīrtan* to the people at large since *bhajan* has been the principal democratic media which could absorb all categories of people irrespective of social and caste rigidities. In 1963, Sri Lakshmi Nrsimha Kalyana mandapam was contructed opposite to his house for celebrating the festivals. His sons, Mani and Sanjiva Bhagavatar carry on the tradition set by their illustrious father.

Bhagavatar, a colossus among bhagavatars, belonged to the waning tribe of eminence in devotional music. Swami Haridos Giri was a stalwart in recent days and unfortunately he is also not there now.

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Publication : Srimad Bhajanāmrtam published in 1950.
A telugu edition came out in 1966.

* * *

B.R. GOVINDASWAMY—VIOLINIST: (April 10, 1917-January 25, 1966)

Place of birth : Chikballapur, Kolar district.

Parents : Ramayya-Nagamma

Ramayya was a mridangist. Paternal uncle, Krishnappa was voco- violinist. Hailing from a musical family, Govindaswamy had his training in music with his father and then his uncle. An addict to music, Govindaswamy left off scholastic studies and took to music earnestly. Disciplined, soft-spoken, humble with a keen intellect for clarity and details, he soon acquired proficiency and merit. There was a *bhajan*-homage near his house. He commenced early in the night and would not stop even when the day had dawned. That was his standard of total commitment and surrender to melody. Intense practice equipped him with profound knowledge and techniques of elegant presentation bringing to focus the nuances and finesse of play. Destiny blessed him with an opportunity to accompany Sangita Kalanidhi Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar. Govindaswamy was nervous naturally to be sideman to the titan; but inspired by the latter, he played his role with merit, which he attributed to the graciousness of the Kalanidhi. Bhairavi Kempe Gowda, a great disciple of Patnam Subramania Ayyar and co-student of Mysore Vasudevacharya, once unostentatiously came and invited Govindaswamy to accompany him at a concert. He did it brilliantly though young and considered it as a milestone in his life. He stated that he gathered spiritual inspiration from the maestro. Soon Govindaswamy happened to provide accompaniment to top musicians and also play solo. Mysore B.S. Raja Ayyangar of the popular *Jagadōddhārana* song fame toured the whole of India giving concerts with Govindaswamy and Mridangam Puttachar as accompanists. At one of his solos, a galaxy of eminent men including the noble Madan Mohan Malavya was present. Malavya praised Govindaswami's mastery and presentation. As it sometimes happens, a vocalist at a concert at Bellary indented on *apoorva* (rare) rāgas and *prayōgas* to place the accompanist ill at ease. When Govindaswami responded with ease and elegance, the vocalist regretted and became a close friend.

Govindaswamy was magnanimous enough to instantly agree when a lad pointed out a slip in his rendition. When he accompanied Tiger Varadachariar at a concert at Madras, the Sangita Kalanidhi complimented him, 'You are Govindaswami Pillai reborn'. Mysore and Gadwal Samsthanams patronised him.

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He declined appointments at Tirupati and Madras as he loved his own place much and was of a retiring temperament. The school he started at Chikballapur runs still.

Honours & Titles : Presided over Akhila Karnataka Sangita Sammelan in 1941.

Pranava Nada Kala Vichakshana by the Public of Chikballapur in 1954.

Raghusutha in his book *Sunada* has covered his life fully. The wages of devotion and dedication to art in yester years were poverty, neglect, isolation and frustration. Govindaswamy had it in full measure and left this planet with few to mourn! A good man, a good violinist, Govindaswami laid his life at the altar of music before he could complete his 49th year!

H

T.R. HARIHARA SARMA — PERCUSSIONIST: (b. January 4, 1904)

Having passed the Teacher's training course at the Thanjavur Government School, Harihara Sarma got employed as teacher. But his ardent desire lay in percussion; and so he quit the job after a year. He underwent a full course of training for three years under the stalwart percussionist, Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Ayyar. Later he joined the Annamalai University for another two years' training under the famous Ponniah Pillai. Arriving at Madras, he was participating in concerts and was working as teacher too for sometime.

Harihara Sarma met with an accident when he slipped from the electric tram which was then plying at Madras and this resulted in his being handicapped from playing on mridangam. Undaunted, he took to morsing. He had been giving special tuitions to numerous disciples, among whom Karaikudi Mani, K.M.Vaidyanathan and his sons T.H. Vinayak Ram and T.H. Subashchandran have distinguished themselves. The stature of the master finds reflection in the ebullient rendition of the disciples, their wide practice and popularity in and out of India

Posts held : Teacher
Morsing artiste with All India Radio (1940 - 1950)

Institution founded : Sri Jaya Ganesa Talavadya Vidyalaya, Madras which has acquired much importance.

Publication : Methods to learn mridangam - 2 volumes

Title : Kalaimamani from Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram.

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I

ILANGO: Author of *ŚILAPPADIKĀRAM* — Amazing facts:

(c. 5th Century A.D.)

Another Garland (pages 137-138) presents a full account of Ilango, the immortal author of the magnificent work *Śilappadikāram*, one of the Five Great Epics in tamil, full of music, dance, culture and focus on social conditions and literature. Not only it presents an absorbing story full of arresting plots and pregnant morality — both political and social, but it presents a comprehensive scholarly treatise on music and dance dexterously woven into the web and texture of the main story.

The popular view all along has been that—

Ilango was the brother of the Chera Prince Senguttuvan;
Ilango belonged to the second century A.D. and that
Ilango entered on renunciation to avoid possible impediments to his brother ascending the throne similar to Bhishma of *Mahabharata.*

Raghunathan has dealt with this subject *in extenso* and delved deep into contemporary literature and has come to the conclusions — startling in concept, weightage, impact and application — based on facts and literature belonging to the periods relevant that—

Ilango was NOT a Prince of the Cheran dynasty;
Ilango was NOT the brother of Cheran Senguttuvan;
Ilango did not belong to second century at all but could be put to the fifth century A.D.;
Ilango is not the proper name of the poet but is only the **nom de plume** taken from the author's caste, which was Ilango similar to Chetty, etc. and that
Ilango belonged to Kaveripoompattinam and not to the West Coast!

The amazing conclusions - rather the startling revelations - are mind-boggling and dismantle the edifice consistently repeated and affirmed through ages presumably based on legends successfully introduced by zealous poets and story-tellers!

Iravatham Mahadevan is quoted as of the opinion that Ilango is the common word to describe princes as seen from inscriptions while K.A.N. Sastri and

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Vaiyapuri Pillai are stated to hold the view that Ilango was the author's **nom de plume.**

Raghunathan avers that Ilango, a caste name, had been adopted as was the fashion then as in the case of Sekkilar, Kambar, Valluvar, etc and that the author belonged to Kaveripoompattinam. This looks fair and reasonable since the entire episode revolves around that place except the Fate-ordained trek to Madurai, the Pandian capital and the tragedy enacted there. Kaveripoompattinam accounts for the maladies of youth, marriage of the hero with Kannaki, the seduction of the hero by dancer Madhavi and the subsequent romantic and musical part of their lives. The Madurai stay denotes revealing signs of impending tragedy, cheating of the hero, music and dance to propitiate God, miscarriage of justice and the acme of the unparralleled sense of pristine justice of the king, etc. The hero himself comes off the trading community. For a Chera Prince to seek hero and heroines for his epic from the shores of Bay of Bengal seems far-fetched too. Actually Raghunathan brings out a background theory - quite plausible - that the story is based on the revolution of the prosperous trading community against the landed aristocracy and its successful prosecution and culmination.

Kannagi's father is described as a Naicken similar to the Ilango community. Adigal, the author avers, is but a term of respect applied to learned men and need not indicate a renunciate. Thus the real name of the author of *Silappadikāram* is held out as not known.

Raghunathan states further that *Vañji Kāndam,* etc. were later interpolations to achieve the point of making the author a Chera Prince. Perhaps the last word has not been said yet. This does not belittle in any way the magical grandeur of conception and alluring portrayal of the story.

How the entire atmosphere in those distant days (15 centuries back) was surcharged with celestial dance and permeated by music of absolute purity is repeatedly brought out by Ilango in different scenes:

'Kuḻal vaḻi niṉṟadiyāḷē; *yāḻvaḻit*
taṉṉumai niṉṟadu tagave; *taṉṉumaip*
piṉvaḻi niṉṟadu muḻavē.'

(Music through flute followed by the sweet strains of music from the strings of harp, the mridangam and other instruments.)

—Araṅgēṟṟu Kādai

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'...melviralgal, payirvandin kilaipōl
palnarambin misai padara.'

(Madhavi's soft fingers wafted like petals of flowers across the strings of the harp giving rise to sweet sound like the humming of bee)
—*Kānalvāri* in *Silappadikāram*

J

G.R. JAYA—VOCALIST: (b. April 15, 1940)

Place of birth	:	Mysore
Training in	:	Ayyanar College of Music, Mysore Prof. V. Ramaratnam Anoor Ramakrishna Has passed the Proficiency Examination with distinction.

Jaya has been giving concerts for All India Radio, sabhas and many other institutions. Has been taking lead roles in special musical features like Kunti-Karna, Sri Krishna Vaibhave, etc. Has given cassette recordings.

Title	:	Gamaka Kala Kokile by Sri Vyasaraya Swamiji of Sosale Mutt.

Jaya is the wife of Sangita Kalaratna Bangalore Venkataram, a distinguished percussionist and hers is an active musical family.

* * *

Dr. (Mrs.) M.K. JAYSHREE — VEENA ARTISTE & MUSICOLOGIST: (b. September 29, 1950)

Academic Qualification	:	B.Sc., B.Ed., M.A. (Music) & Ph.D.(Music)	
Music training under	:	M.J. Srinivasa Ayyangar, Vainika & a 'genuine flower of distilled fragrance'. M.K. Saraswati, Veena Vidushi & Dr. V. Doreswami Iyengar, a Padma Bhushana.	
Posts held	:	Research Assistant, Bangalore University (teaching musicology)	1980-85
		Research Associate, Bangalore University (teaching musicology, etc.)	1990-93
		Reader in Music, Sri Padmavati Mahila University	since 15.04.93

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Kamalamma, Jayshree's mother, is a violinist. Jayshree has been giving concerts for All India Radio, institutions and sabhas, presenting lecture-demonstrations, etc. Has composed music for documentaries, television serials, etc.

K

V. KALAVATI — VOCALIST: (b. September 9, 1969)

Parents	:	Sangita Kalaratna Bangalore K. Venkataram, a prominent percussionist and G.R. Jaya, vocalist
Qualification	:	M.A. (Music) 1992
Training in music		G.R. Jaya Usha Char Anoor S. Ramakrishna

Kalavati has been giving concerts for All India Radio, Doordarshan and various institutions. Has secured quite a number of prizes which is but natural to one hailing from a talented musical family. Has a good future.

Has given cassettes.

* * *

KALPANA KISHORE — VIOLINIST: (b. April 21, 1971)

Place of birth	:	Madras
Parents	:	K.B. Kishore and Seetha Kishore
Qualification	:	M.A.(Music)
Musical training under	:	T. Rukmini, an eminent violinist who gives vocal concerts also.
Concert tours	:	South Africa, U.S.A. (1995)
Titles	:	Sama Gana Priyasudha by Malaikottai Vinayaka Temple, Tiruchirapalli (1985) Yuva Kala Bharati by Bharat Kalachar (1985)

Kalpana Kishore is among the prominent rising artistes. She provides highly competent accompaniment to numerous musicians on All India Radio and at sabhas, etc. Since 1982 she has been securing various prizes, awards and medals; an impressive list indeed she has. Has been giving solos too. Unostentatious presence on the dais and tuneful rendition mark her play.

* * *

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S. KARTHICK (RAJ KOUNDINYA) — GHATAM ARTISTE:

(b. June 7, 1971)

Place of birth	:	Quilon, Kerala	
Parents	:	E.V. Subramaniam & Padma Subramaniam, a musician	
Academic Qualification	:	M.A. (Sanskrit), M.Phil.	
Training in ghatam under	:	T.H. Vinayakram & T.H. Subashchandran	Both top artistes in percussion.
Title conferred	:	Yuva Kala Bharati by Bharat Kalachar in 1992	

Mother Padma Subramaniam had come out of the Trivandrum Music College and the Central College of Carnatic Music, Madras and had further training under O.V. Subramaniam and T.R. Subramaniam. Thus a musical home presented young Karthick with initial inspiration and ample scope to practise.

Karthick is in the thick of popular ghatam artistes. His amiable and affable cultured presence ensures co-ordinated and understanding laya at concerts. His Manamadurai-made ghatam (pot) withstands his dexterous play with scintillating strokes to match not only the main artiste's *swara prasthara,* etc. but the mridangist's challenges at concerts. Karthick is conversant with konnakol and morsing too. He has been providing competent accompaniment to senior vidwans at all forums ably. Has won many prizes; has presented papers at seminars. With his rich knowledge of sanskrit, he hopes to secure Ph.D. on a topic related to music viz., 'Percussion in Sanskrit Literature'. Has given an audio cassette on ghatam-play.

Concert tours abroad	:	Muscat	1992 & 1996	France:	1996
		Doha & Bahrain	1993	U.K.:	1996
		USA	1995		

* * *

J.L. KASINATHA SASTRI — VIOLINIST:

(b. March 20, 1922)

Place of birth	:	Chikkaratthagopa, Kolar district
Father	:	Lakshminarasimha Sastri, violinist who had his training under the celebrated Tiruvaiyaru Subrahmania Ayyar
Musical training under	:	His father Seenappa
Posts held	:	Artiste, Akashvani, Dharwar Teacher, Karnataka Vision, Dharwar
Debut	:	Accompaniment to Hindustani concert of Gururam Deshpande. Later he provided accompaniment to Dr. M.R. Gautam, Hanumantha Rao, etc.

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Kasinatha Sastri improved his knowledge and expertise by imbibing the best in performing artistes and was retained by Kalakad Ramanarayana Ayyar for his concerts. He passed Sangita Visharada examination in Hindustani music also, having had his training under Hanumantha Rao Waltaker.

Kasinatha Sastri has been providing able accompaniment to many musicians at Bangalore and elsewhere besides giving solos. He made his mark in presenting Vakchitra Vrinda while with Akashvani.

* * *

KATHIRVELU SIVAPALAN - MUSICOLOGIST: (b. February 2, 1953)

Academic Qualification	:	M.A. (Tamil)
Qualification in music and teaching	:	Diploma in Music from Govt. Music College, Madras Diploma in Music Teaching from Govt. Music College, Madras Diploma in Pans (Tamil ragas)
Professional experience	:	Visiting Professor, Annamalai University - Music Department
		Lecturer in Musical Pedagogy & Musicology, Govt. Music College, Madras.
		Research Assistant in Music Information Bureau, Madras 41 Editor, *Pannum Bharatamum.*
Publications	:	*Payantarum pannisai Padigangal* *Pannisai Tattuvam*
Titles received	:	Pannisai Kalanidhi Tirumurai Selvamani Tamilisai Mani Tirumurai Isaivānar

Sivapalan is very active in the field of music with keen, laudable interest in Tamilisai and has been appreciated for his dedicated work by the Kanchi Meikandar Adheenam and V.G.P. Ulaga Tamil Sangham. He had made an in-depth study of folk music with a two-year training under Mugavai Rajamanickam. He is connected with Tyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha, Tiruvaiyaru, Tamil Isai Sangham and the Theosophical Society.

* * *

KESAVA BHARATI OF SENDAMANGALAM — COMPOSER : (19th Century)

Kesava Bharati composed the dance-drama titled *'Kapilai Natakam'* with a superlative legendary theme. A cow goes daily to the Ganges to bring holy water to perform services to a Linga (Lord Siva) in Vakula forest. One day, a tiger

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confronts it. The cow promises to complete the services and come back to offer itself to the tiger as prey and does so. The Lord blesses it with salvation and the place is called Tiru-go-karnam (sacred place involving a cow and its cup-like ears.) Its salvation is celebrated on Avani-Moolam day at Tirugokarnam. The dance-drama was enacted though not regularly. The famous rock-cut cave temple of Sri Gokarnesa-Brhadambal, the tutelary deities of the rulers, is a popular shrine. Sri Vakulavaneswara has a shrine in the temple. *Vakuḷābharanam* is a melakarta raga and also a melakarta tala. Has it any relevance to this temple or place?

— Source: *Pudukottai District Gazetteer*

* * *

R.S. KESHAVAMURTI — VAINIKA: (1903 - December 17, 1982)

Place of birth	:	Belur, Hassan district (a very famous place in Karnataka)
Father	:	Subba Rao, R.
Academic Qualification	:	Matriculation
Training in music under	:	Father Venkataramaniah, uncle Vainika Pravina Subbanna, a stalwart of yester decades
		Diploma in Western Music from Trinity College of Music, London
Posts held	:	Asthana Vidwan, Mysore Palace (Appointed in 1935 and he should have ceased to be so before May 1, 1959 when the posts were all abolished.)
		Bandmaster, Mysore Palace English Band.

Keshavamurti hailed from the fertile Rudrapatnam nursery of musicians. Some areas suddenly spring up with a crop of eminent musicians and there is perennial flow thereafter and Rudrapatnam is one such. Keshavamurti had toured extensively and had performed before all-time Indian greats like Gandhiji, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, many rulers and celebrities. The prominent musicologist/critic, B.V.K. Sastri states that Keshavamurti was a purist but that it did not prevent his experimentations on veena. He developed the Gayatri Veena with 24 strings adding seventeen additional sympathetic strings to improve its tonal quality. In this, he was in the august company of Mysore Chowdiah who did similar improvements to violin with remarkable success.

R.S. Keshavamurti could play violin, flute, jalatarang, piano and balakokila (350 stringed). He had the distinction of giving the first concert at the celebrated Prasanna Sitarama Mandira Hall built by Bidaram Krishnappa opened in 1929.

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His house was literally a multi-dimensional House of Melody with most of his sons coming up as renowned musicians (and musicologists) like—

R.K. Srinivasamurti
R.K. Suryanarayana
R.K. Raghavan
R.K. Padmanabha — all vainikas
R.K. Chandrasekhar, violinist (no more) and
R.K. Prasannakumar, mridangist.

His disciples outside the portals of his family home are equally large. The magnificent family traditions in music are kept up by his worthy successors.

Keshavamurti was a *sakala kala vallabha.* He got the gift of the famed Kanaka Rajata Veena from his guru, Veena Subhanna on the eve of the latter's death. This unique veena got up according to traditional sastraic injunctions with due rites and rituals has Saraswati, Lakshmi, Chamundeswari and Ganapati in gold and silver installed on it. His son R.K. Padmanabha has this priceless asset in his possession.

* * *

T.M. KRISHNA — VOCALIST: (b. January 22, 1976)

Academic Qualification : Bachelor of Arts

Learnt music under : B. Sitarama Sarma, Principal, Kalapeetam, Madras
: Chengalpattu Ranganathan in pallavi rendition
Madhyama Poorna examination of Akhila Bharatiya Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya

T.K. Krishna has secured the Government of India scholarship for cultural talent since 1988 and has been giving concerts since the age of twelve. In fact his performance in that year for the Spirit of Youth Series got him the prize for talented vocalist. He is one of the upcoming young artistes who have caught the imagination and earned the appreciation of music-lovers and consequently has been quite busy with his concerts. Quite popular, his rendition and presentation are absorbing and pleasing. His *alapanas* and *swara prastara* bear the stamp of intellectual approach. Has been giving concerts for All India Radio, sabhas, etc., at most of the centres in India.

Concert tours abroad : Singapore, Reunion Islands & South Africa.

Has given cassettes.

* * *

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V. KRISHNA, M.E. — MRIDANGIST: (b. February 25, 1966)

Father : Bangalore K. Venkataram, a distinguished percussionist & Gamaka Kala Kokile G.R. Jaya

Training in mridangam play under → Initially, his father, a Sangita Kalaratna Then A.V. Anand

The pleasant mridangist is a Mechanical Engineer (Heat Power Engineering) and is presently Lecturer in Sir M. Visweswaraya Institute of Technology, Bangalore. A musical home, ample scope for pursuits in percussion and innate aptitude helped Krishna to acquire proficiency in mridangam. He has been providing percussive accompaniment to prominent musicians at different centres and for All India Radio.

* * *

C.S. KRISHNA AYYAR — VOCALIST: (b. March 23, 1916)

There were no musicians at home but there was music. The period saw a deluge of traditional music of quality and merit. After an initial, brief training under Sesha Bhagavatar, father of Palghat Mani Ayyar, C.S.Krishna Ayyar joined the Rajah Annamalai Chettiar Music College in 1930 and had the benefit of close exposure in *quasi-gurukula* style to the music of titans like Principal Sabhesa Ayyar, Madurai Subramania Ayyar (Violinist) and Tanjavur Ponniah Pillai. T.K. Rangachari and K.S. Narayanaswamy were his seniors there and Sathur Subramaniam was a class-mate. Desamangalam Subramania Ayyar handled the subsidiary subject, Veena. In 1934, Krishna Ayyar got the diploma Sangita Bhushanam.

S. Natarajan (a junior contemporary of Ayyar at Annamalai Chettiar Music College) writes in *Sruti:*

> 'Practical examination, 1934: After Krishnan rendered a couple of routine pieces when called upon by examiners, Sabhesa Ayyar, Ponniah Pillai and T. Lakshmana Pillai, Ponniah Pillai asked him to sing *pallavi* in *Chatusra Rupakam* in *Sankarabharanam.* While Krishnan proceeded with *niraval*, Sabhesa Ayyar asked A.G. Subramaniam to join in to sing *niraval* and *swara* alternatively. Still further, M.S. Selvapulle Iyengar of Mysore (another student) was asked to join and they sang by rotation. Ponniah Pillai asked them each to sing *kalpana swaras* for the four *eduppu-s* in the *pallavi* corresponding to the four words *Ninnu nammiti Tripura Sundari* at their respective places in *pallavi...*'

This indicates the rigorous standards at examinations held then. No wonder that most of the students who passed out then rose up to the top echelons of

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the musical hierarchy! As were the teachers, so were the students and vice versa. The prayer in *Taittiriopaniṣad* (reproduced elsewhere in this book) squarely applied to the situation that prevailed then. It was all massive high quality production and not massive quantity production. Has been giving concerts for All India Radio and Sabhas. Had taken lead roles in dramas. Krishna Ayyar's style of rendition is traditional and uncompromising in old values and he is a dedicated teacher.

Debut at	:	Pune	(1934-35)
Posts held	:	Professor, Swati Tirunal Academy of Music, Trivandrum	1942
		Principal, Music Academy, Palakkad now called the Chembai Memorial College of Music till 1971	
		Member of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Board of Studies of the Kerala University	
		Member, Experts Committee, Music Academy, Madras since 1979	
Honours & Titles	:	Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Award	1972
		Certificate of Merit from Music Academy,	1987
		Honoured by Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer Golden Jubilee Trust	1990
		Sangita Kala Acharya from Music Academy, Madras	1995
		Sangit Natak Akademy Award	1995
Compositions	:	He has composed many songs and set to tune songs of Irayiamman Thampi, Kuttikunju Thangachi and K.C. Kesava Pillai	

* * *

S.V. KRISHNAMURTHY — CRITIC & JOURNALIST:

(b. September 17, 1925)

Saint Arunagirinathar who dedicated his enchanting *Tiruppugaḷ* to posterity for its spiritual elevation and enlightenment chose Tiruvannamalai for his critical advents. Muthuswami Dikshitar hails the Lord of Tiruvannamalai, Arunachala, in his exquisite kriti *Arunachala Natham (Sarṅga)*. The sacred hillock, the divine atmosphere, the Elysian environment drew Sri Ramana Maharṣi of distant Tiruchuli to locate his *aśram* here. It is also one of the centres of the Five Elements *(Pancha Bhūta Kṣētrās)*. A centre of intellectual activity, no wonder it has become the headquarters of a district now.

At Tiruvannamalai, the home of an advocate hummed with chaste, classical melody pickled with robust humour. The advocate, S.V.V. as he was popularly known, drew not mere smiles but boisterous laughter in thousands of homes with his homely, subtle, seductive and impersonal short stories. A sister, for

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instance, becomes the image of egoism as she got high marks at examinations while the brother, quite intelligent but not a book-worm, struggles to reach the minimum. There is no inclination on his part to try to reach the grade. Instead, he wants to browbeat and pull down her image. With innocent rage he asks:

'What is the year of birth of Elizabeth I?'

(The girl throws out the reply even before the question is completed.)

'What is the year of birth of your father?

(She blinks and he sneers at her!)

'Well, take out a tomato and cut it.'

(She does it.)

'Show me where vitamin A is.'

(She blinks.)

This is all from memory of his short stories or serials, Rajamani or Sivaraman. The mother fed her sons and daughters with music. S.V. Parthasarathy, one of them, is a Sangita Bhushanam and a performing artiste. Soundararajan sang with him. S.V. Krishnamurthy is a senior journalist and a music critic of merit and standing. He assimilated the grace, grandeur and substance of music without any formal training.

'Kamban vīttu tariyum kavi pāḍum' (even the loom in Poet Kambar's house will reel out poetry), runs the proverb. Tiger Varadachariar, a musical colossus, would state that even pillars in his house at Kaladipet would sing! Even so, the absorbing, all-embracing music at home did shape Krishnamurthy into a learned musician and a critic of distinction. He avers:

'Ours is a highly talented musical family. I have had no formal musical education. All my knowledge in music has been gained by *kēḷvi jnānam*. Veteran vidwans used to come to meet my father, stay, discuss and demonstrate the styles and merits of eminent vidwans of the earlier era. I have heard them all and that formed the main foundation. Also, had the good fortune of listening to the rendition of great nagaswara vidwans who came and played for the Kartigai Dīpam Festival. My guidance in good music is mainly from the way my father taught my brother, S.V. Parthasarathy at home.'

A musician:

S.V.K. has sung once in the 3 - 4.30 p.m. slot at the Music Academy and had sung regularly as artiste of All India Radio for three decades and stood out only when the issue of upgrading came up. Can one without formal training be an accredited artiste? And for so long? Why not? Sangita Kalanidhi Papanasam Sivan had no formal training either in music or in tamil. Young T.Mukta kept the drone when T.

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Brinda sang under the tutelage of Naina Pillai; but soon sang together. Sarabha Sastri was listening to the teaching of Vedas by a pandit on the pial of the opposite house. After sometime, he called the pandit and presented *guru dakshina!* When questioned, he recited the Veda as was taught by the pandit to his disciples who were probably still struggling to memorise! It is all purely background, environment, aptitude, intuition, assimilation and understanding. Thus S.V.Krishnamurthy was amateur among professionals and professional among amateurs!

A critic:

While in the *'Hindu'*, he covered December Festival performances in some of the major sabhas with professional perfection and ethical candour. On retirement, he is the newspaper's regular music critic. Take out any Friday Review annexure to the *Hindu* and S.V.K. shall surely be there. His special articles like the series 'Know Your Tyagaraja', 'Masters' and 'Trend-setters' are the outcome of six decades of dedication to classical, *sampradaya* music having drunk deep the elixir of chaste rendition of stalwarts during the Golden Era of Classical Carnatic Music and thereafter. His analyses are balanced to cater to the needs of artistes and the demands of enlightened rasikas. He has also contributed about 300 short stories in tamil to *Ananda Vikatan, Kalki* and *Dinamani Kadir.*

Place of birth	:	Tiruvannamalai
Parents	:	S.V. Vijayaraghavachariar and S.G. Pankajammal
Academic Qualification	:	Master of Arts.
Training in music	:	*Swayam kṛiṣi*
Posts held	:	Joined the Hindu as an apprentice in 1947 and retired as Assistant Editor in charge of Friday Magazine in 1992
		Now Music Critic with the *Hindu*
Publication	:	Articles, critiques, stories, skits and 'Laugh with SVK' (Alliance Company)

The triple passions of S.V.K. are Ramayana, Tyagaraja and Carnatic music. "My music equipment is God's gift. I express my gratitude to God by singing kirtanas at home and reciting slokas in *ragas.* I discharge my task as music critic as a duty", avers SVK. His career is thus a fine proof of the dictum 'Once music, always music' and is thus a gifted melodic life.

* * *

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PATHAMADAI S. KRISHNAN — A MUSICAL CRUSADER

(b. October 15, 1921)

Pathamadai S. Krishnan is a born crusader in the field of Classical Carnatic Music, tireless in his efforts to propagate it in his own unique way. The appellation 'Pathamadai' itself has a significance since that place is well-known for its well-designed mats of exquisite workmanship and matchless beauty. He was born at Shencottai which presented the illustrious S.G. Kittappa - Kasi Ayyar Brothers whose remarkable contribution in the twin fields of music and drama is yet to be excelled. Heredity lent its grace and legacy to Krishnan. Great grandfather Viswanatha Ayyar was Dewan of Ettayapuram, once a cradle of music, in its heydays when venerable Muthuswami Dikshitar of the Musical Trinity and his brother Baluswamy Dikshitar were received and patronised by the Raja. The Dewan was among the disciples of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Krishnan's father K.M. Subbarama Ayyar and brother Sundaram were musicians. Mahakavi Subramania Bharati was a step-cousin and Ettayapuram Ramachandra Bhagavatar, guru to the famous Madurai Pushpavanam and many others, was a relative.

Born in such a cultured family amidst musical affluence and environments, Krishnan had initial training in music with his father, then with the two Sangita Kalanidhis Vedanta Bhagavatar and Muthiah Bhagavatar and later with A. Anantakrishna Ayyar. Legacy and training enabled Krishnan to commence giving concerts regularly from the age of seventeen both on All-India Radio (December 11, 1938) in which he is 'A' Grade vidwan and elsewhere. To enrich his expertise, he had training in Hindustani music also with Abdul Karim Khan presumably inspired by the Dikshitar-Bharati connections vis-a-vis their wide art perceptions.

Krishnan claims to have evolved a composite *Bharata Sangītam* integrating the Carnatic and Hindustani systems in a bid to recall the pristine glory of Indian music as it obtained prior to the advent of Persian influence or as a fusion of the two systems. He is an authentic exponent of *ragam, tanam* and *pallavi* including *Cakratānam.* Krishnan avers that the raga *Karnātaka Kāpi* has lost its original grace and *swarūpa,* that Tyagaraja's kriti *Rama Raghukulanidhisoma* aids in recapturing the original grace of the raga and that he had identified the real *swarūpa* at his concerts besides composing a *varnam* and *kritis* in the *raga.* Perhaps a cassette may help musicians in understanding Krishnan's stand.

As regards compositions, 89 varnams and about 200 *kritis* and *tillanas* stand to his credit. Dr. Gomati Sankara Ayyar of Annamalai University, Chidambaram, published his *varnams* in his book *Tāna Varna Kadal* (Ocean of *Tana Varnas*). Krishnan has himself published some of the inspiring songs of Subramania Bharati tuned and notated by him in his *'Bharati Padalgal'.* He was Examiner for Music for

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graduates of Madras University and is associated with Tyagaraja Sangita Vidwat Samajan, Madras.

Age and lack of resources have not quenched his irrepressible rage and noble urges to concretise the songs of Subramania Bharati and publicise his immense sacrifices. To achieve this, he founded in 1981 the unique institution 'Nādakkanal' (The Flame of Melody) to have concerts with Bharati songs alone and to honour senior and junior artistes at a festival annually. In the short span of a decade and half, 144 artistes have been honoured with the title 'Nādakkanal'. The credit for sustaining the institution and the tempo goes **not** to the material affluence of Krishnan but to his inspired dedication to the art and to the great national poet, Bharati.

The Dikshitars of Chidambaram conferred the title of Sangitaramya Kokilam on him in 1942 regardless of the then prevailing war conditions as if Bharati's vision of independence was soon to prove true! Krishnan composed on the spot the kritis *Innum Irakkam Varavillaiyē (Gundakriya)* and *Kāvāi (Nāttai)* inspired by the *sannidhi* of the Cosmic Dancer. Bharati Isai Kavalar is another title conferred by Nādakkanal. Government of India conferred a Fellowship on him.

The unique characteristics of S. Krishnan are his profound love of music, immense self-respect and large heartedness to take delight in honouring others - a sort of *bṛhmānandam* in honouring *nādōpāsakas,* roping them all into the patriotic *Cakṛavyūha* of Mahakavi Subramania Bharati since they all carry the effulgent title Nādakkanal. Krishnan lives in the *manasika* world intensely conversing with Bharati and his own musical ancestors and placing his life and services at the feet of Sri Matangi Devi (Goddess of Music) and Bharati.

— Earlier published in *Shanmukha*

* * *

SUCHINDRAM S. KRISHNAN - MRIDANGIST: (b. July 9, 1921)

Son of S.G. Subramania Bhagavatar, a musician, Krishnan belongs to Suchindram kṣētra in Kanyakumari ḍistrict. The temple there has musical pillars with 24 or 35 granite rollers which when tapped produce musical notes. Krishnan underwent training in music with Nagercoil Padmanabha Ayyar and in mridangam with Nagercoil Ganesa Ayyar. He had served at the All India Radio stations, Madras, Trivandrum and Kozhikode. Has accompanied popular vidwans.

Concert tours	:	Holland, Germany
Title	:	Kalaimamani from Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram, Madras (1995)

* * *

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TIRUPPUGAL MANI T.M. KRISHNASWAMI AYYAR — RENOWNED DEVOTIONAL MUSICIAN and COMPOSER: (September 2, 1884 -January 1967)

A walk along the dew-drenched broad Mada streets of Mylapore in the cool, cheery, fragrant and refreshing pre-dawn hours even now confers the triple blessings of *śāntam, soukhyam* and *śivam.* It brings to mind conjuring visions of soul-stirring *bhajans* of bygone days and the melodic cadence of devotional music rendered by celestial messengers like Ambhi Dikshitar and Papanasam Sivan. To relive the experience is exhilarating *brhmānandam,* supreme joy and absolute identity with *Nāda* and *Nādabrhmam.* The devout thronged in their thousands braving the chill and hazards to join the *bhajan* processions along the heavenly streets to take the message of the Lord and His Apostles virtually to the door-steps of innocent, god-fearing young and old waking up in a hurry and feverishly cleaning, watering and decorating house-frontages. For what? It was their lurking but Himalayan wish that the *bhajan* party should linger on for a brief moment in front of their respective houses to shed grace and benediction! There was no mundane, earthy consideration or wish behind it. When the *bhāgavatās* walk up to their houses as messengers of *Paramātma,* should not the *Jivātmas* meet them, pay respects and seek to get elevated? That was the sum and substance of *bhajans.*

With praise of the Lord in chaste *sahitya* set to melodious, catchy tunes enriched by the sweet jingles of cymbals and repetitive sounds of percussive instruments, the parties made deep, unobtrusive impact on the receptive lay public and instilled in their virgin minds love of god. The *bhgavatas* did all these for sheer love of god and humanity. They took it as their proud privilege and ordained duty to do *bhajan* and that mission they fulfilled with total dedication. Even as Saint Tyagaraja did in *Endaro Mahanubhavulu (Sri Raga),* house-holders paid their respects with hearts of pure gold and blemish-free devotion and quite a few prostrated before the party on the streets as if gods had condescended to present themselves at their doors. For a brief while, each man and woman became incarnations of Appūdi Adigal, Karaikal Ammaiyar and the wife of Purandaradasa, Saraswati Bai and drank deep the sumptuous thrill of godliness and elevation of their spirits surrendering their hearts and souls in a *quid pro quo* to experience the fragrant and amaranthine feel of *adwaita.* Mylapore was not the only place of such spiritual endeavours. The whole of Bharat reverberated with *bhajans* of diverse styles. The Spirit of *Brhman,* the Universal Soul, enveloped and established its full sway during those memorable

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moments in those unforgettable centuries and decades. It was all an air of gold and godly presence; perhaps the only pride of Bharat!

To these successive waves of immortal bands of holy men belonged T(ruvaiyaru) M(uthanna) Krishnaswami Ayyar, a celebrated legal luminary enjoying lavish legal acumen and practice. It was, indeed, the ordained privilege of many distinguished lawyers, etc. not only to take in *arohana* the grievances of their clients to judicial notice in courts but also in *avarohana* carry the messages of God and His Apostles to humanity for their edification. How effortlessly black coats, turbans and ties yielded to traditional textile wares, talcum to sacred ash and brief cases and walking sticks to cymbals and *sruti* boxes was a marvel. It was their rare but unique honour to walk along streets bare-bodied to the reverential gaze of man, animal and even the elements! If Appar Swamigal sang, 'What can prisons do?', these *bhagavatas* assumed or believed, 'We are servants of God; why care for mortal man's dissipated fears and views!' Would not the chill and dew of the month of Margasirṣa, the chosen month of God, affect their health? 'How could they, when we have surrendered all to Him *(atma nivedana)* through *śravana, kirtana, namasañkīrtana, vaṇdana, dāsya* and *vātsalya?'* They took courage from Thirunavukkarasar's dictum:

'En kaḍan paṇi seidu kiḍappadē
Nin kaḍan aḍiyēnaiyum kāppadu.'

(Mine is to do my duty and leave it;
Thy duty is to ensure my welfare too.)

The echo of this *vedantic* concept took firm hold of *bhagavatas* and they did their *bhajans* uninhibited by weather, atheism, age and sex. They lived in an, inspired atmosphere that marked the acme of spiritual excellence.

* * *

Place of birth	:	Akhilandapuram near Tiruvaiyaru
Parents	:	Appanna Rayar & Sitalakshmi (later adopted by Muthanna, paternal uncle) (Appellation Rayar indicated grandfather Venkata-subbier's service with East India Company.)
Family	:	Dr. Sivakamu, renowned doctor & Dr. Rukmini Devi, Founder of Kalakshetra, Adyar were his sister's daughters and Subbarayar, prominent advocate & educationist was his brother's son.
Publications	:	*Kandar Anubhūti* *Kandar Alankāram*

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Samarasa Nāmāvali
Pugaḷmani Vāchakam

Titles & Honours	:	Tiruppugaḷ Mani by the Paramacharya of Kanchipuram	1927
		Raja Sevaka Pravina by the Ruler of Travancore	1943
		Tiruppugaḷ Jyoti by Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh	1955

Krishnaswami Ayyar was charmed by Vallimalai Swamigal during a visit in 1922 and became his life-long devotee; *Tiruppugaḷ* took fanatic hold of him. The undying songs of Sri Arunagirinathar created such an impact on the great-hearted advocate that he himself became a missionary to propagate them with zeal and devotion. He was not a tamil scholar but his rendition of the celestial songs with titillating *bhava* enjoyed clarity and emphasis. He was not a scholar in sanskrit too but his immaculate pronunciation was the envy of many. Nor was he musically trained but his rendition was orthodox, traditional, melodious, superb and soulful. This may remind one of what Papanasam Sivan said of himself when he was conferred with the covetous title of Sangita Kalanidhi at the Music Academy in 1972. Krishnaswami Ayyar's *Tiruppugaḷ bhajans* were widely acclaimed and his house witnessed a steady stream of the devout of diverse hues keeping parity with the flow of clients in his professional sphere! He revelled in their company. Law and *bhajan* became his twin fields of endeavours, expertise and excellence. No wonder the musical seer of Kanchi deemed it fit to honour him with the appropriate title of Tiruppugaḷ Mani, synchronising with his initials "T.M." It was the crowning glory to Ayyar's soulful, passionate devotion to *Tiruppugaḷ* and *bhajan.*

Twenty-eight years passed and the rare honour shaped him into a 'Tiruppugaḷ Jyoti' as Swami Sivananda Saraswati hailed him.

> 'From the earliest days, TMK was not only a great rasika and a passionate and erudite lover of music but was also a capable and enthusiastic exponent of vocal melodies...It was remarkable to see the busy lawyer transforming himself during week-ends into a typical swami smeared with *vibhuti* bubbling over with songs...'
>
> — Sir C.P. Ramaswami Ayyar

> 'He ranged the full gamut of his vocal powers in rendering the songs with clarity and emotional appeal...'
>
> — K. Chandrasekharan

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Ayyar's innate flair for devotional songs — more particularly those on Lord Muruga — carved out for him a niche in the pure hearts of the devout. He sang on radio, at temples and institutions, held regular *bhajans* on Fridays at home and enjoyed a dynamic band of disciples and admirers. His intense humanism in helping people and institutions, his deep religious faith in ensuring renovation of Vadapalani Andavar temple and construction of Tiruppugaḷ Mani Mandram at Tiruchendur, his unique contribution and his interest in literary circles with T.K.C. and Kalki made him a respected figure enjoying unique stature among members of the Bench and the Bar as well as the public. It was said of Sri Rama—

'Un kāl vaṇṇam aṉṟu kaṇḍēn;
Un kai vaṇṇam iṉṟu kaṇḍēn.'

(I saw the merit of your foot the other day when you emancipated Ahalya and the merit of your hands I saw today when you broke the Siva dhanus-bow.)

Even so, people believed—

'If Ayyar sets foot, the house or institution would grow;
if he donates, the coffers of the cause would glow.'

Krishnaswami Ayyar played a great role in enthusing Nidamangalam Krishnamurti Bhagavatar to bring to full public gaze the undying songs of profound divine grace of Uthukadu Venkatasubbier.

Ayyar himself composed many songs. There are recordings of his *bhajans.*

Sidelights :

Posts held	:	Chief Justice of Travancore High Court	1943-47
		Dean of the Faculty of Law & Hony. Professor of Jurisprudence, Travancore University	
		President, Advocates' Association.	

Was connected with institutions like P.S. Educational Charities, Venkataramana Dispensary, etc. Had participated for sometime in Home Rule League agitations of Annie Besant.

The Bench of the Madras High Court was hearing a first appeal. At 4.20 p.m. Justice Pandrang Rao told his colleague Justice Abdul Rahman, 'Today, TMK has a radio programme; we have to adjourn' and they *suo motu* adjourned! That was the measure of his stature and rapport.

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The Supreme Court Judge, not amused with the trend of his arguments, remarked, 'I do not want *bhajans* here'. TMK's instant retort was:

> 'Your Lordship, when I take up *bhajan* outside, I forget my legal work. When I enter the Court to take up legal work, I keep my *bhajans* outside.'

The Judge CHOSE to attend his *bhajan* that eve!

Justice Gentle warned TMK repeatedly that he was ill-serving his client by persisting in a particular trend and told him,

> 'I am against you! Your client will lose not only heavy stamp duty but also incur heavy costs.'

Nothing availed of. The Muruga-bhakta-advocate persisted and won the case. That was the merit and efficacy of his pleadings. He was an adept in pleading before both man and god!

A humanist of vast parts, a man of high spiritual values, a crusader in propagating devotional songs and a treasure-house of penetrating legal wisdom, T.M.Krishnaswami Ayyar was a *dharmic karma yogi* in whom nothing but excellence dwelt.

L

LAKSHMI RANGARAJAN — VOCALIST: (b. August 16, 1964)

Place of birth	:	Madras
Names of parents	:	R. Subramaniam and Saraswati
Qualification	:	B.Com.
Musical training under	:	Sangita Kalanidhi T.M.Theagarajan for over fifteen years.
Concert tours	:	Singapore, Malaysia and U.K.

Lakshmi Rangarajan had been drawing scholarships from the Government of India from 1977 upto 1986 and presently getting Brhadhwani scholarship since 1994. Has given concerts for All India Radio, sabhas, etc. since her debut at the Krishna Gana Sabha in August 1981. She has a pleasing voice and absorbing style of rendition with unruffled composure and 'deep delicate refinements having had a

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long innings of strict training under a top senior vidwan. Has a good future.' 'Impeccable taste and conformism adorn the music of Lakshmi.' (KSM)

Cassette recordings.

* * *

LALITHA NAVILE — VOCALIST: (b. August 15, 1940)

August 15th! What a memorable date! India declared its independence in 1947 and Sri Aurobindo was born in 1872 on that date. Lalitha Navile too was fortunate to be born on that date in 1940 at Bangalore.

Names of parents	:	Bindiga Navile Anantaraman and Vidamma.
Academic Qualification	:	M.A. (Music) & Proficiency in Music.
Musical training under her brother		Bindiga Navile Narasimha Murthy, violinist, composer & founder, Jayaprabha Sangita Vidyalaya.
Debut	:	At the age of nine
Languages known	:	Hindi, English, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada & Sanskrit.
Instruments handled	:	Veena, Violin, Harmonium, Casio, Ghatam and Kanjira.
Teaching experience	:	Principal, B.N.M. Memorial College, the institution founded by her brother-guru (renamed after him).
Publications	:	*Tillana Guchcha* in kannada & reproduced in cassette)
		Sri *Padmavati Suprabatham* (kannada & telugu) reproduced in cassettes
		Desabhakti Gitalahari (kannada)
		Varna Prabodha (in cassette too)
		Mani Pravala Heeram

Tillana Guchcha is claimed to be the first batch of *tillanas* in kannada and includes *talamalika,* and *ganaragamalika.* Lalitha Navile is a voracious composer. Her compositions number a three thousand besides four hundred *pallavis* called *Caturbhasha Pallavi Sankirna Mala. Murugan Kritimanimalai* (14 in tamil) and *Krishna Lila* (drama) and *kritis* are among her heavy output which have been published.

A tireless musical soul, Lalitha has got the unique capability to explore every known structure, theme and aspect of melody. Has

framed new ragas, — held lecture-demonstrations, been giving concerts - regular and special like *Eka raga* and *manipravala* concerts for All India Radio, Doordarshan and elsewhere and teaching quite a number.
Has numerous cassettes to her credit.

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Her brother-mentor, Narasimha Murthy was a violinist and composer and he had trained many. He was a disciple of Thanjavur Tyagaraja Bhagavatar and Subburama Dikshitar (Madras).

M

UNKNOWN AUTHOR OF *MAHA BHARATA CHUDĀMANI:*

(c. 18th Century)

Maha Bharata Chudāmani or *Sangītādi Raga Tala Lakṣanam* is a comprehensive work by an unknown author, four parts of which had been traced. These have 1288 verses. It is presumed that the author should have hailed from the Pandya region of South India. Part IV is a digest on music and dance in general besides *Puruṣa* ragas, *Mela raga lakṣanas,* etc. in 243 verses. The manuscript was traced from Ramanathapuram. The author closely follows and draws inspiration from Sarngadeva, the author of *Sangita Ratnakara* and Somanarya of the 17th century, who has authored the work, *Natya Chintamani.* The author has also relied on *Sangita Sastra Samkṣepam, Sangraha Chudamani, Sangita Sara Sangraha,* etc.

Part IV cited has been published with the help of its editors, Sangita Kalanidhi Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar and R. Viswanathan.

* * *

K.S. MAHADEVAN — EMINENT CRITIC & MUSICOLOGIST:

(b. July 17, 1913)

1913 was perhaps the Year of Musicologists in Classical Carnatic music and dance. K.S. Mahadevan, a distinguished multi-faceted musicologist, critic of renown and journalist of standing was born in that year.

Place of birth	:	Palamadai, Tirunelveli district
Parents	:	K.P. Subramania Ayyar and Lakshmi
Academic Qualification	:	M.Sc.
Posts held	:	Secretary, Forward Markets Commission, Bombay (retired on July 31, 1971)
		Earlier he was in the Ministry of Commerce (Trade Marks & Patents) during 1941-1953

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Assistant Editor, *Capital,* Calcutta

Member, Dance Audition Panel, Doordarshan since 1990

Journalism and Arts won him over long before his ordained retirement on superannuation and kept him remarkably active liaising with artistes and journalists over a long time. He contributed articles earlier to the reputed *Financial Times,* London, *Eastern Economist,* New Delhi and *Commerce,* Bombay besides others. (He had given an excellent review of my first book, *A Garland* on the All India Radio, Madras when I knew him not.)

A vivacious soul that delights in the grandeur of the charms and harmony of the twin allied arts of dance and music, Mahadevan could hardly confine his attention and contain his activity to the prosaic work of officialdom. The poetry of his innate artistic soul and its inclinations and keen interest in active participation led the young man of nine and twenty to become and continue as the Secretary of the famous Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha, Bombay from 1942 to 1960. If at national level Jawarharlal Nehru was architect of Free India for seventeen years, in the micro field of arts, Mahadevan was the architect of the Sabha for eighteen years. He was also Founder- Editior of *Shanmukha,* the journal on music and dance from 1965 to 1979.

His gluttonous musical instinct yearned for more. His unique penmanship found copious vent through articles in newspapers and souvenirs. His lucid lectures at seminars, etc. have been avariciously taken and appreciated. His radio commentary 'Sa-Re-Ga-Ma' was selected by SAARC Audio Visual Exchange and was broadcast. He enjoys clarity of thought and a classical style of presentation. Immense musical memory and wide contacts spread over five decades (impressionable not only in the history of Bharat but also in the annals of the twin arts) equipped Mahadevan well to take over as an elder critic of repute and stature. If Kapil Dev missed just one test in his distinguished, record-breaking long span of cricketing life, Mahadevan missed just one year (1981) in his role as Music and Dance Critic to *Indian Express* since 1970! There is nothing earthy or cheap to cater to prurient tastes in his writings. His analysis is brief and clear; language is graceful. He wields a refined and cultured pen which reflects the finesse of his culture and the benevolence of his heart. His critiques are pickled with apt idioms and quotes presenting a homogenious blend of art in language and language on arts. His language would lead a stranger to conclude that he had been an academic all along.

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Yamini Krishnamurti once wrote, 'Critics have ruined for ever any idea of good or bad dance that may have existed...They want pampering.' Mahadevan is congenitally incapable of coming under this category. His pen knows not to demote artistes, degrade art or demolish their aspirations. He is one of C.E. Montague's type of critic, who 'in his humble way, is an artist himself'. His is a specimen of Yehudi Menuhin's clarification that a critique of Dr. Johnson's time meant an appreciation. His unostentatious and genial presence enthuse artistes. He is knowledgeable in the science and art of music and dance like Neville Cardus, having 'the score in his head and not his head in a score'. Critics of Mahadevan's tribe enrich art and enlighten artistes and rasikas. A good man, a gentleman, Mahadevan is a respected figure.

Honours & Awards from:

Madras Telugu Academy	1993
Sri Krishna Gana Sabha	1993
Sri Maharajapuram Viswanathier Trust	1994
The title of Bharata Vimarshana Bhushana from Sri Bharatalaya, Madras	1996

* * *

S. MAHADEVAPPA — VIOLINIST: (b. August 28, 1930)

Place of birth	:	Mudikondam near Kollegal
Father	:	Subbappa, a harmonist
Musical training under	:	Siddha Shetty Kollegal Narayanaswamy (three years) Tirumakudal Narasipura Puttaswamayya (brother of T. Chowdiah)
Post Held	:	Teacher in Lalit Kala Institute of Music, Mysore University.

Mahadevappa's apprenticeship with Puttaswamayya was long and enduring. He received specialised training in vocal music for about eight years and accompanied him in his concerts.

Mahadevappa is a prominent artiste and his sons, Mysore Nagaraj (1960) and Manjunath (1969) are brilliant violinists giving solos and accompaniment.

* * *

SIKKIL MALA CHANDRASEKHAR—Flautist: (b. August 23, 1963)

Sikkil is famous as one of the prime shrines of Singaravelan. It was planted on the musical map of India by the renowned top flautists, the Sikkil Sisters - Kunjumani and Neela. Mala Chandrasekhar is the daughter of the latter. It was

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a musical home with Kunjumani giving concerts since 1939 and Neela from 1947 and both as Sikkil Sisters since 1962. Mala thus was a gift to celebrate the first anniversary of their joint debut. With constant practice at home and exposure to successive concerts of the Sisters, she thrived under the joint training of both and by the age of fourteen, she was an accomplished flautist.

Debut at a sabha	:	1980 at Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras.
General Qualification	:	B.Sc.

A vibrant artiste, Mala brings into her rendition verve, vigour and artistry with inherited technical excellence of her elders and a polish that is born of having been suckled from birth with classical music of the highest merit and laya precision, a legacy from her maternal percussionist-grandfather, Azhiyur Natesa Ayyar. She plays along with Kunjumani and Neela as trio and along with Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi and Jayanti Ravikiran as the Triple 'V' Ensemble - Vina, Venu and Violin. Has been giving concerts all over India, for all India Radio and Doordarshan and sabhas. From the Home of Melody, Mala has entered the Home of the Queen of Melody, Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi on marriage!

Titles and Honours :

Awards from the Music Academy Madras, Youth Association and Narada Gana Sabha.

Kalaimamani from Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram in 1995.

* * *

MALATHI SUBRAMANYAM — VOCALIST: (October 8, 1927-1989)

Place of birth	:	Kolar, Karnataka
Parents	:	K. Srinivasan, IAS Rtd, & Jayalakshmi (who had received Sahitya Academy Award)
Academic Qualification	:	B.Sc.
Training in music at	:	Saraswati Sangita Samaja, Chikmagalur in veena Cuddapah Krishnamurti, Ambi Bhagavatar, Violin Nanjundaswamy & Prof. M.A. Narasimhachar, with sister Lilavati and cousin Prema, in vocal music.
Concert tours	:	USA, UK, Europe
Titles	:	Kala Pravina by Sri Visweswara Tirtha of Udupi Pejawar Mutt Vidya Ratna from Tirukkoilur Swamiji

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Malathi Subramaniam had been giving concerts and lecture-demonstrations in India and abroad. The multi-faceted composer-musicologist S. Mukund is her brother and she was very helpful in propagating his songs and aiding his lecture-demonstrations.

* * *

MALI (T.R. MAHALINGAM) — FLUTE WIZARD: (November 6, 1926 — May 31, 1986)

Another Garland and *Yet Another Garland* deal with the life of the genius-wizard, Mali *in extenso.* No other artiste has drawn on himself so much of superlative commendation, disappointed criticism and sympathetic wrath as he.

Mali was also experimenting with the conch. He completed a book which was to be a primer for flute-players. It is not known whether it saw the light of publication. In an interview to UNI, Mali said in March 1986:

> 'Carnatic music has become commercial and its standard is far less sublime;
>
> Carnatic music has become in a way unethical but the music would live on as it has its own clear and unalloyed individuality;
>
> Lack of creativity and rigours of rules have to some extent affected the popularity of Carnatic music;
>
> Concerts of some musicians have become more and more demonstrative glossing over its pristine glory;
>
> Jugalbandi of Carnatic-Hindustani music: it may be impossible to fuse these two systems together;
>
> Critics should know their own limitations; and
> I find no real meaning in awards like Padma Bhushan.'

May artistes and sponsoring institutions give thought to these in the context of the lapse of one more decade.

* * *

'Flute Mali may properly be rated as the greatest spoilt child Indian music had witnessed... a matchless genius, he disappointed a massive and eager

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audience by ending the show abruptly soon after it had started... **Mali was spoilt more by his rasikas than by himself.** Excessive pampering of his moods and over-acclamation of his genius had much to do with his abnormal professional behaviour which covered frequent failure to turn up at concerts, coming late and either abandoning the show or asking a disciple to continue... his eccentricities were enjoyed; all his playful tricks were applauded!

'Once his wayward and naughty self was compelled to behave... at a concert in Kerala with thousands of rasikas... Mali was not merely playing below expectations but actually fooling the audience with prankish music. Audience was getting restive. A brother of the patron went up to him and whispered something... Probably that he would be beaten black and blue if he failed to play properly! Instantly he transformed; the prankish vein disappeared and profundity appeared.

'In the link with Papa Venkataramiah, Mali found his guide who influenced his musical mould and idealogy. Listening to the incredibly expressive music of Jayammal, he came to know the quality and value of impersonal vintage classicism. This was the golden period when Mali dissolved in music and acquired insights which turned him almost into a mystic! Performing in the company of Papa and Palghat Mani Iyer, Mali touched the peak of his musical integrity. His *raga jnānam* and song interpretative faculties were at their best. Music was coming effortlessly and sublimely using him just as an instrument. **Mali ceased and music flowed! When he played a great song, he became the song itself!** This was verily Sangita Yoga; he transcended the flutist to convert the instrument into a celestial voice with the entire range of *gamakas*, glides, oscillations, *asaivus,* delicate nuances and varied other graces of Carnatic Classicism. The repose of his tone was heightened by the extraordinary composure of his musicianship.

'Much of the waywardness and complexity in Mali's musical career started with the **entry of the bottle into his life.** Often, a concert progressing beautifully got affected when he remembered the "flask" by his side and reached out for it!

'If any musician possessed the extraordinary genius to establish the unique and matchless quality of Carnatic Classical music for the range and depth of aesthetic and emotional experience, it was Mali. This was the destiny but he failed to fulfil it!'

— N.M. Narayanan - *Frontline:* 1986.

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'Mali showed me the letter Ramakrishna Hegde had written to him offering all help if he would settle down in Karnataka. It was a hand-written letter and Mali was proud of it.'

— S. Shiva Kumar in *Frontline*

* * *

MANDA ANANTA KRISHNA — FLAUTIST: (b. May 28, 1975)

Place of birth	:	Hyderabad
Parents	:	Manda Balarama Sharma, 'A' grade Staff Artiste, All India Radio & Manda Vijayalakshmi
Academic Qualification	:	B.Com.
Musical training under	:	Manda Balarama Sharma, father Akella Mallikarjuna Sharma (since 1995)

Ananta Krishna is presently B.High Grade artiste with All India Radio. He has been giving concerts since 1991. Born in a musical family and having been suckled with flute music since birth, he has a future.

* * *

MANDA BALARAMA SHARMA — (Blind) FLAUTIST: (b. December 23, 1938)

Place of birth	:	Monganda, Andhra Pradesh.
Names of parents	:	Manda Suryanarayana & Manda Saradamba
Musical training under	:	P. Somayajulu M. Balamurali Krishna T.R. Mahalingam
Post held	:	'A' grade Staff Artiste, All India Radio, Hyderabad Station (since 1971)

Congenital blindness did not prevent Manda Balarama Sharma from becoming a prominent flautist. He has been giving concerts since 1958, participating in station concerts, national programmes, Radio Sangit Sammelan and institutions in Andhra Pradesh and outside. He is Honorary Member, Board of Studies, Telugu University. Has been honoured by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Sharma is a talented flautist. He has brought up his son, Manda Ananta Krishna also as a flautist. May he blossom up to his full stature. Many a musical

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soul without sight has found internal rhythm and high musical vision like Dr. Venkataswami Naidu of Andhra, Sarabha Sastri of Tamil Nadu, Gavai of Karnataka and the present M. Chandrasekharan, Violinist.

* * *

MADURAI G.S. MANI — VOCALIST: (b. April 6, 1934)

Place of birth	:	Ayyampettai near Thanjavur. The celebrated disciple of Tyagaraja, Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar had stayed there.
Training in music under	:	His mother initially Ayyampettai Venugopala Pillai Jalatarangam Babu Ayyangar, grandson of Poochi Srinivasa Ayyangar Sangita Kalanidhi Mazhavarayanendal Subbarama Ayyar and his disciple, Dr. P.C. Sitarama Ayyar, at Madurai
Academic Qualification	:	Graduate in Economics

G.S. Mani has been performing from the age of seventeen; and his early advents in composing music and songs for dramas drew appreciation from the reigning stars of the stage, T.K. Shanmugham and his brother, T.K. Bhagavati.

Mani had a memorable stint in film music as Assistant Music Director under M.S. Viswanathan for seven years covering over sixty films. He has been giving lecture-demonstrations on music in films of yester decades which were in chaste Carnatic Classical music. They conformed to all the canons of theory and *sampradaya* but had a dramatic gloss and appeal. Mani used to demonstrate how they conformed to *arohana* and *avarohana* and *raga swarupas* and how they are eminently worthy of being sung even at concerts... incidentally enlightening the audience about 'unknown angels (ragas) through a known devil!' The programmes drew packed houses and there was full participation and involvement. As eminent musicians like Lata Mangeshkar and others have said, there has been total deterioration in the quality of film music, particularly in tamil film music. Mani states:

> 'Present-day film music is composed mostly on scales and not on ragas as in old days. A tune based just on a scale or *gamaka*-free notes alone could not be a raga. There has been a great deterioration...'

The first programme was for Rasikapriya, Tirupur in 1976. He has given about thirty such programmes with hefty participation of the audience who became aware of the close indentity and affinity and absence of any discord in film music with *lakshanas*. Mani mentions that there is heavy demand for such programmes in and out of India.

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Mani has been giving quite a large number of concerts for All India Radio, television, sabhas, etc. in classical music. He is 'A' grade artiste both in classical and light music. Had gone to Andaman twice as a multi-lingual singer.

Concert/Lecture-Demonstration Tours :

USA, Canada, UK, Gulf countries, West Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland, Singapore, Malaysia & Hongkong.

He had produced on television—

Muthuswami Dikshitar, a telefilm in 1987
Movar Kanda Annai
Swati Tirunal
Simhanandana Tala and a feature on mridangam.

Was music director for special national programmes. Has given many cassettes. Was Member, Audition and Selection Panels of All India Radio.

Compositions	:	About 250 in sanskrit, tamil & telugu	
Titles	:	Sangita Jyoti from Swami Sivananda, Rishikesh	1956
		Innisai Ilaval from Olavakode Tamil Sangham	1961
		Ganakala Koustabha from Public of Tirumangalam	1964
		Gana Kalamruta from Gnanananda Trust	1988
		Gana Kalanidhi from Bhandup Fine Arts, Bombay	1995

Mani has been contributing articles. Was with Sri Gopalakrishna Bhagavatar, the renowned *bhagavata* of Pudukottai for about twenty years. Early in life, he was encouraged by Pandit Omkarnath Tagore, Siddheswari Devi and Begum Akhtar, eminent Hindustani maestros. His ancestors had migrated from Andhra and his father was known as the Zemindar of Chatrapatti. His concerts are satisfying. *Alapanas* and *swara* delineation are intuitive and heartening. A popular vidwan with a distinct stamp of his own.

* * *

T.A.S. MANI — MRIDANGIST: (b. May 15, 1941)

Place of birth	:	Mysore	
Father	:	Arunachala Ayyar	
Teachers in percussion	:	H. Puttachar M.L. Virabhadriah H.P. Ramachar	in kanjira

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Mani changed over to mridangam and has accompanied prominent artistes at various centres. His percussive talents are high. His sisters, Jaya and Bhagya are vocalists. His wife, R.A. Ramamani is an *avadhana pallavi* expert. Thus it is a multi-sided musically rich family. Mani is an influential percussionist in the area and has presented lecture-demonstrations.

Institution founded	:	Tala Tarangini - a laya institute which has attracted quite a number of disciples.
Publication	:	Contributed the Laya Chapter to R.R. Keshavamurti's *Sangita Lakshya Vignana*
Post held	:	Principal, Karnataka College of Percussion.
Concert tour abroad	:	Europe in 1972 with Vainika Mukund

* * *

MARIAPPA, S.N. — VOCALIST: (b. December 8, 1914)

Place of birth	:	Sasalu
Father	:	Nanjappa Upadru
Learnt music under	:	Melkote Narasimha Ayyar Palghat Someswara Bhagavatar (higher studies, theory & concert techniques) Got the diploma of Sangita Bhushanam from Annamalai University
Titles & Honours	:	Asthana Vidwan, Mysore Court Gana Ratna - title conferred at Kolahpur Gana Sudhakara
Institutions founded	:	Saraswati Gana Kala Mandira, Mysore (with branches elsewhere) Karnataka Sangita Vidyalaya Vidyaranya Fine Arts.
Publication	:	Karnataka Kirtana Manjari.

Mariappa entered the cinema world under H.R. Padmanabha which provided rich scope to his good talents, knowledge and expertise. His classical style had been appreciated by Tiger Varadachariar and others. He had been conducting festivals and honouring many artistes. Was well versed in *yakshaganas* and songs for dramas too.

Mariappa has composed *varnams, kritis, javalis,* etc., many of which have been used for dramas. Has tuned *Aṣtapadis, Allama Prabhu Rachanas.* Was also associated with institutions other than those he founded.

* * *

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BANGALORE S. MUKUND—COMPOSER/MUSICOLOGIST:

(b. Jany 31, 1938)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Parents	:	K. Srinivasan, IAS (Rtd) & Jayalakshmi, a Sahitya Akademy awardee and author.
Academic Qualification	:	B.Sc. & Rashtrabasha in Hindi
Musical training	:	Mostly *Swayam krishi* - self-taught *Kelvi jnānam.* when his sisters Lilavati and Malathi had their training. The musical instincts in Mukund did not lag behind in imbibing their lessons. Had brief training under T. Sundara Raja Iyengar and violin under Hyderabad Kuppuswamy of All India Radio.
Compositions	:	About 5000. Presumably few days had passed without Mukund composing a song in sanskrit or kannada, telugu, tamil or hindi!
Publications	:	Devised the *Mela Raga Chakra* at the age of thirteen and published in 1963 titled *Janaka Raga Swara Sarini.* It was included in the *Journal of the Music Academy,* 1972. R. Ranga Ramanuja Ayyangar has included the chart in his popular book, *History of Indian* (Carnatic) *Music* in 1972. *Sangita Lalitya Lahari*

A restless musical soul ever in pursuit of musical excellence, Mukund is a mult-faceted personality. His songs have been sung at concerts but since he is not a professional musician himself, the huge musical arsenal, well appreciated and lauded by competent authorities, lie with him unused. The massive efforts he had put in to bring up such a huge output with dedication deserve to be appreciated. But mere appreciation does not suffice. Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan opines that the compositions are inspired outpouring of his *bhakti* in the Lord. Has composed about twenty-seven dance-dramas which have been presented by eminent artistes like Leela Ramanathan and Padmini Ramachandran. 'Give a theme, tell him what the composition should be - kriti or dance-drama or something else. You can come and pick it up quite soon.' *Varnams, Javalis, padams, ragamalikas* with *chittaswaras* for bharatnatyam have been composed by him.

Mukund is a musicologist with numerous lecture-demonstrations to his credit. He has brought out a book on musicology, first published under the title *Sangita Lālitya Lahari* in 1989 blessed by the Sage of Kanchi. Comparative studies of Western, Hindustani and Carnatic music and a lexicon of *murchanas,* etc. have been included. He has participated in conferences of the Music

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Academy, Madras, Sangit Natak Akademy, New Delhi etc. and is a prominent figure in the music circles of Karnataka. Has given concerts in India and abroad. His sister Malathi Subramaniam was a vocalist. His mother was a noted author of dozens of books. Mukund is a musical soul totally dedicated to the graceful art.

* * *

GAYAKASIKHAMANI Dr. L. MUTHIAH BHAGAVATAR — (Novr. 15, 1877 - June 30, 1945)
MULTI-FACETED MUSICAL COLOSSUS:

Place of birth	:	Punalveli near Sri Andal's Srivilliputtur.
Parents	:	Lingam Ayyar and Andalammal
Musical heritage	:	Muthusubba Bharati, grandfather, was a composer-musician Scholar M. Lakshmana Suri was uncle (and guardian on Lingam Ayyar's death when Bhagavatar was about six).
Training	:	He was deputed in 1886 for Vedic studies under Muthu Ganapatigal, Tiruvaiyaru but after sometime, he switched over to music till 1893 under Tiruvaiyaru Sambasiva Ayyar, Violinist-disciple of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar. Later, he acquired mastery in composing *nirupanams,* etc. under Pune Bhattji for harikatha.
Concerts before rulers	:	1897 at Travancore 1927 at Mysore Mysore became his home later and he expired there.
Vocalist to Harikatha Artiste - Switch over	:	In 1904, he began to give harikathas and came to be called Bhagavatar.

'Being a first-rank musician, learned in *Puranas,* sanskrit and tamil, endowed with a fine personality, he enjoyed a wonderful power of exposition scintillating with wit and humour. In the art of harikatha kalakṣepam, Bhagavatar discovered himself.'

— Justice T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar.

Pioneering Advent	:	*Valli Parinayam* which was his pioneering master-piece, followed by *Sati Sulochana* (from *Ananda Ramayanam*) and *Tyagaraja* (with songs of the Bard). He became highly popular for these. He composed the *nirupanams* with exquisite ease and merit.
Posts of distinction held	:	Presided over the Conference of Experts, Music Academy, Madras in 1930 Principal, Teachers' College of Music, Music Academy 1932-34

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		First Principal, Swati Tirunal Academy of Music, Tiruvanantapuram & codified the songs of Swati Tirunal Maharajah 1936-43
Titles & Honours	:	Gayakasikhamani by Maharajah of Mysore & Samsthana Vidwan in 1927
		Sangita Kalanidhi by Music Academy, Madras in 1930
		Doctorate by University of Travancore in 1943
Institution founded	:	Music Training Centre, Madurai in which Sangita Kalanidhis Madurai Mani Ayyar and Budalur Krishnamurti Sastrigal studied.
Book authored	:	*Sangita Kalpadrumam* on theory of music.
Ragas invented by Bhagavatar	:	Quite a number. His life itself was a glamorous rakti raga!

Vijayasaraswati *Hamsa-gamani*	in *kirtana*	*Śaraṇam-Vijaya* *Sri Mahiṣāsura* *Sadāśivam Sadāsraye*
Karna-ranjani		*Vanchathonu na* *Sthanum Bhajāmyaham*
Pasupati-priya		*Pasupatipriyā - sati* *Saravaṇa bhava* *Uraga-raja-mani* *Apavarga Pradām*
Budhamanohari		*Samayamidē* *Kamēsabaddha*
Guharanjani		*Ikanetala* *Navāvaraṇa - rasa*
Sumanapriya		*Sri Śaravaṇa*
Hamsadipakam		*Śikhivāhana* *Panchavaktṛam*
Kokila Bhāṣini		*Idi vela*
Alankari		*Navarātṛiyotsava*
Valaji		*Jālandhara*
Sāranga-Malhar		*Sri Mahabala Giri*
Gauḍa Malhar		*Sārasa Mukhi* *Jaya Devi*
Niroṣta		*Rājarājarādhitē*

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Mayapradipam	*Tappu mannisu*
Vinadhāri	*Girija deviya*
Hari Nārāyani	*Devi Simhalakṣmi*
Nāgabhūṣaṇi	*Ganeśa Skanda janani*
Hamsānandi	*Sachamararamavani*
Chakra-pradīpta	*Chakresi Devi*
Vijayanagari	*Vijayāmbikē* *Anēkātmanē*
Urmika	*Kālāratri*
Gurupriya	*Sri Śambaśiva Sadguru*

Gamut of compositions :

Tana varnams	*Stuti kirtanas*
Pada varnams	*Astottara kirtanas on Sri Chamundeswari.*
Daru varnams	*Astottara kirtanas on Siva.*
Ragamalikas	*Navagraha kirtanas*
Tillanas	*and Nirupanams for kalaksepas.*

Languages adopted : *Chamundeśwari Astottara kirtanas* in kannada
Siva Aṣtottara Sata kirtanas mainly in sanskrit
Earlier compositions were in telugu and some in tamil.

Styles adopted by him : Tyagaraja was his inspiration and model. After 1931, Dikshitar was his inspiration. He composed in many *apūrva* ragas that existed only in treatises before. The special feature is that Bhagavatar has added *chitta swaras* to his compositions. There is brevity of *sahitya* and ample scope for *manodharmic* exposition.

Bhagavatar was a violinist too. He enjoyed a rich sonorous voice and did not indulge in false voice in rendition. He excelled in *tānam.* He enjoyed a rich practice, wide popularity, prestige and high image among musicians and the public. On the death of his daughter, he adopted Vaidyalingam, son of Hariharan, his brother, disciple and voice-support. Among his disciples were Budalur Krishnamurti Sastrigal, Madurai Mani Ayyar, Gottuvadyam Narayana Ayyar, Professor Narayanan and Vaidyalingam. Justice T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar also learnt music from him.

'During his stay at Benares, when he listened to rendition of Hindustani music, Raga *Sohini* impressed him much and he decided to adopt it in Carnatic music. Omitting the occasional *Panchama prayogas,* its *lakṣana* tallied with

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Hamsanandi. Immediately he composed the kirtana *Nidu Mahima Pogada,* which was widely adopted by musicians. Two more songs were composed by him in the same raga. Similarly, *Mohana Kalyani* then in disuse was brought to focus with the compositions *Bhuvaneswariya, Siddhi Vinayakam* and *Sivam Vṛṣabhārūdham.'*

1927 Dusserah at Mysore. Bhagavatar wanted to enter the Mysore galaxy. There was resistance from vested interests. Afflicted by cold and cough in addition, he was stale in his performance and was discharged with an honorarium. Disappointed, he composed the song *Mānamu kāvalenu talli (Sahana)* and was singing it before Goddess Sri Chamundeswari as if taking leave to depart with telling effect and pathos which attracted a crowd around him. Maharaja Krishna Rajendra Wodeyar while on his rounds of worship heard, got him back to the Court for two successive recitals. Highly impressed with his ravishing rendition and musical acumen, he conferred the rare title of 'Gayakasikhamani' on him and made him one of the principal Samstana vidwans! Vidwans who looked back at him condescendingly had to look to him for a nod!

His signature for his songs is 'Harikesa'. Once he gave a recording of *Evarini (Devāmṛtavarṣini).* When he happened to hear a rendition of the song by S.G. Kittappa, his gracious mind decided that the best should prevail and he withdrew his rendition. That was the eloquent grandeur of his approach.

His participation in meetings and the Experts' Committee deliberations in Music Academy lent dignity, lustre and depth. An arresting personality, a connoisseur in sartorial elegance and a stalwart in the *lakshana-lakshya* aspects of music, he dominated the musical sphere much. **He was the first musician to be honoured with a Doctorate.**

His *aṣṭottara kirtanas* and many others are in the nature of *archanas* to Devi, Siva, etc. He makes mention of his patron, the Maharaja of Mysore, Nālvaḍi Krishna Rajendra Wodeyar in:

'Madhuravacana mandahāsa vadanana mahīpati
Nālvaḍi Sri Kṛṣṇēndrana
Vidhindrādi pūjitē slahou
Vimala Harikēsa sahite Amba' in Cidagnikuṇḍa sambhūte (Atana)

and in:

'Pūrnama Candruni bolumukhi Bhūpa Nālvaḍi
Sri Krisnēndra sannutañgi' in *Sannutañgi (Vasanta).*

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Practically all his songs are on deities. Justice T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar records that among **post-Tyagaraja composers, Bhagavatar has the largest number of about 400 songs** and that he drew from folk songs and even availed of tunes of Western music expressions suitable to the scheme of Indian ragas. Bhagavatar was indeed a colossus in every sense of the word. He was a complete musician.

* * *

MUTHUSWAMY DEVAR — MRIDANGIST:

Dr. V.S. Sampathkumaracharya of Mysore states that Muthuswami Devar was a highly respected and popular mridangist of the Mysore Court and that his advent established a new style in mridangam play such as playing *jatis* and *moharās.* Mridangam assumed the primary place at concerts thereupon relegating the tabla to the background. He brought about a revolution in mridangam play with his unique fingering techniques, artistic and tuneful *gumkas,* etc. Was he the Karnataka counterpart of Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Ayyar?

Among his disciples were T.M.Puttaswamiah (Moogiah) and T.M.Venkatesa Devar (son).

N

MANDAPAKA NAGALAKSHMI — MRIDANGIST :

(b. December 25, 1966)

Place of birth	:	Visakhapatnam
Father's name	:	M.V.J.K. Murthy
Academic Qualification	:	B.A with Vocal Music Diploma in mridangam Certificate Course in vocal music
Musical training under	:	Nemani Somayajulugaru, Staff Artiste, All India Radio, Hyderabad. Mullapadi Sri Ramamurthygaru, Staff Artiste, All India Radio, Visakhapatnam Karaikudi R.Mani, mridangam maestro, Madras.

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Post held : Assistant Lecturer in Mridangam, M.R. Government College of Music & Dance, Vizianagaram.

Debut : Mandapaka Sarada's concert at Visakhapatnam on September 30, 1979.

Mandapaka Nagalakshmi hails from a musical family. Maternal grandfather, Vaduguru Nilakanta Sastri was a harikatha exponent and was quite at ease in vocal, violin and mridangam. He had composed ten harikathas. Nagalakshmi's mother is a vocal artiste and father was a theatre artiste. Sister Sarada is a vocal artiste and faculty member in the Department of Music, Andhra University, Waltair. Sister Chandramani is a veena artiste of All India Radio, Visakhapatnam. Nagalakshmi is artiste with All India Radio, Visakhapatnam and has been providing accompaniment to numerous vidwans at various centres in South India. Has received many awards.

* * *

NANDIKESWARA — MUSICOLOGIST/AUTHOR:

Indian writers, in their anxiety to dedicate the soul and content of works to God and to conform to *Niṣkāmakarma* (not to claim the merit of any work to the author himself), claim divine origin to most of the works. Why should anyone object to this as if the author(s) had committed a crime? The most ancient of authors, Bharata is reputed to have learnt drama from Lord Brhma at the instance of Lord Siva. Siva is the fountain-head of all arts notwithstanding his primeval appearance as projected in pictures for long and his novel habitat. But Bharata was not conversant with dance too. So, Siva arranged for Tandu teaching him *Tandavam* and Devi Parvati *Lasyam*. This enabled the great Bharata to bring out his *Natya Sastra* still valid even after the lapse of two millennia. Tandu is another name of Nandikeswara. His work *Bharatārnavam* has four thousand slokas and *Bharatarnava Sangraha* is its abridged version.

* * *

AMBALAPUZHA T.S. NANDAKUMAR — MRIDANGIST:

(b. March 17, 1958)

Nandakumar belongs to the distinguished family of Ambalapuzha Nagaswara vidwans of Kerala and had the benefit of drawing inspiration from them while young. Had initial training under Kaithavana Madhava Das and then gurukulavasa with Mavelikara K. Vellukutty Nair for a decade. Presently he is imparting training in mridangam under the auspices of premier institutions in

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Bombay like Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangita Sabha, etc. He has provided rich accompaniment to distinguished vidwans on All India Radio and in sabhas. He has specially trained a percussion ensemble which gives special programmes. He also produced three cassettes titled 'Jewels of Rhythm' containing the solo *avartana* of the percussion ensemble.

Title : Gurusikhamani by Padam, a Bombay-based institution
Award from Kerala Sangeet Nataka Academy

Nandakumar is very popular as a teacher who draws out the percussive talents in his students. He has 'inherent command and dexterity of capturing the attention of rasikas'.

* * *

TILLAISTHANAM NARASIMHA BHAGAVATAR — Died in 1911
TILLAISTHANAM PANJU BHAGAVATAR — Died in1917
MUSICAL SAVANTS

Tyagaraja Swamigal had as many as thirty disciples but among them the Tillaisthanam, Umayalpuram and Wallajahpet disciples were the foremost in contributing much solidity to the preservation and propagation of the songs of the bard and commemorating his name and perpetuating his august stature. The style adopted by each of these schools, called *pāthāntara* of the respective school, slightly vary.

The Tillaisthanam group traces its *parampara* to Rama Ayyangar. Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panju Bhagavatar, his disciples, were pillars of support to their guru in adoration of Tyagaraja and his songs and in the performance of the annual *pujas* (rites) to the bard who entered on *sañyasa* in his last days. The grandson of Tyagaraja, christened after his illustrious grandfather, was doing the principal *aradhana* after the immortality of the saint. After his death, the disciples of Tyagaraja celebrated for sometime the anniversary alone in the house of Subbarama Bhagavatar, one of them. The Umayalpuram Brothers began celebrating the anniversary in their village. Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panju Bhagavatar of Tillaisthanam *parampara* celebrated the anniversary at the Pacchayappa Mudaliar Choultry, Tiruvaiyaru. The celebrations had a chequered career till they got concretised in the forties of this century.

The brothers replaced in 1903 the brick work of the Brindavanam *(samadhi)* with granite work and carried on the ceremonies. When the elder passed away, Panju Bhagavatar continued his dedicatory work with fortitude. The Umayalpuram Brothers - Krishna Bhagavatar and Sundara Bhagavatar - were of immense help

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in all these. An inscription nearby is specifically dedicated to these two *paramparas* - Rama Ayyangar of Tillaisthanam and the Umayalpuram Brothers.

Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panju Bhagavatar brought out the first authentic edition of the kritis of Tyagaraja in 1903. They commenced the *aradhana* festival on Bahula Panchami as torch-bearers at Tiruvaiyaru in 1908 which continues to this day.

The elder Narasimha took to harikatha while the younger remained a vocalist and preserved the kritis and gave notation. The more enterprising elder was perhaps a liberal while the conservative younger was for *status quo* in retaining the spiritual flavour of the celebrations. The divergence of views led to their parting of ways with the elder doing the musical homage with his team called the *Periya katchi* and the younger separately with his *Chinna katchi.* This continued for long till 1940 when the Tyaga Brhma Mahotsava Sabha was formed and the celebrations of the above two as well as those of Bangalore Nagaratnammal Trust merged leaving out the *aradhana* and *adhiṣthana pūjas* alone to be with the Tillaisthanam *Parampara.*

The brothers used to participate in the Margasirsa *Bhajans* in Mylapore along with the Umayalpuram Brothers, writes Dr. Ritha Rajan. Many availed of such occasions to learn songs from the Tillaisthanam virtuosos. The following were prominent in the Tillaisthana *parampara:*

i. Dr. T. Srinivasaraghavan, a prominent disciple of Panju Bhagavatar, had a good repertoire of the songs of Tyagaraja. 'Tillaisthanam mode of rendition by him were in slow tempo with characteristic *gamakas.*' He was the brother's son of Rama Ayyangar. With his wife he used to sing on the Bahula Panchami day every month the bard's songs till his death in 1949!

ii. S. Parthasarathi, a disciple of Srinivasaraghavan, brought out the authentic compilation of the bard's songs in three volumes.

Panju Bhagavatar formed the committee, Sri Tyaga Brhma Vaibhava Prakasa Sabha to continue the religious and connected duties.

The reference to Tillaisthanam, Umayalpuram and Wallajahpet disciples does not imply that others were of lesser importance. For instance, Manambhuchavadi Venkatasubbier was guru to the Pancharatnas - five gems, viz., Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Patnam Subramania Ayyar, Sarabha Sastrigal, Tyagaraja Ayyar, grandson of Tyagaraja who died young and was reportedly a prodigy and Fiddle Venkoba Rao. Umayalpuram and Wallajahpet had released distinguished vidwans likewise. But these two

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paramparas were on the performing and propagating sides. In fact, they have stolen the show in the Empire of the Music of Tyagaraja with their massive ever-enlarging disciple-lines.

* * *

Narasimha Bhagavatar was a school teacher at Melattur while young. As he had good knowledge of telugu and in a fair measure marathi, he took to harikatha inspired by Krishna Bhagavatar's rapturous rendition. He learnt about four hundred songs of Tyagaraja from Rama Ayyangar of Tillaisthanam and from his brother, Panju Bhagavatar.

Narasimha Bhagavatar had published—

The Life of Sri Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal
The Life of Sridhara Venkatesa Ayyaval of Tiruvisainallur
The Aṣtapadi of Sri Narayana Tirtha
Kirtanas of Sri Tyagaraja in telugu in 1903 and
The Utsava Sampradaya Kirtanas.

(Source: Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Chellam Ayyar)

Panju Bhagavatar was a store-house of the songs of Tyagaraja. Many musicians and harikatha artistes like Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar had learnt songs from him. As per advice of Kaladi Swamigal and Upaniṣad Brhman of Kanchi, *sumangali prarthana* is also performed with due rituals to honour the memory of the wives of Sri Tyagaraja who predeceased him one after the other. The brothers enjoyed vast prestige.

In all these, and in the view of these musical savants, music was an integral part of their religion, inseparable, indispensable quite in accord with the origin of music in *Sama Veda.*

* * *

A.V. NARAYANAPPA — NAGASWARA/MUKHAVINA ARTISTE:

(June 21, 1912 - 1994)

Place of birth	:	Arakalgud
Training in nagaswaram under	:	Father, Venkatappa S.C. Beluriah Dodda Sinappa Mysore Rangiah Naidu and Perambalur P.N.Angappa Pillai
Training in vocal music under	:	B. Devendrappa of Mysore Palace Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar

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Narayanappa had thus copious training under distinguished vidwans of proven merit. He was an expert in playing the ancient mukhavina also. He had given extensive concerts at various places and functions. A popular vidwan.

Titles & Honours :

Sangita Kalaratna by Bangalore Gayana Samaja when he presided over its Annual Conference.
Karnataka Kala Tilaka by Karnataka Sangita Nrtya Academy
Karnataka Rajyotsava Award.

B.V.K. Sastry writes that the most important service rendered to music by Narayanappa was the renovation of Kothandarama temple at Srirangapatnam on the banks of the Cauvery and raising a brindavanam of Sri Tyagaraja with daily worship and annual *aradhana* as at Tiruvaiyaru and that this *aradhana* has become one of the important cultural events in Karnataka.

* * *

BETTADAPURA NARAYANASWAMY (VINA NARANAPPA) — VAINIKA:

Learnt music from Moogur Subbanna. Was a good Vainika and a vocalist too blessed with a good voice. Rudrapatnam Krishna Sastry, father of musicians R.K. Venkatarama Sastry, R.K. Srikantan, etc. was his son-in-law. Sastry's elder brother Kallikote Shama Sastry was a kannada vidwan in a Mysore high school and was known for his discourses. It was all a musically talented family.

* * *

TIRUGOKARNAM NARAYANASWAMY AYYAR — VIOLINIST:

(20th Century)

He hailed from Pudukottai and had been providing excellent accompaniment to top artistes including Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar. He was a tone-artiste and the *nada* from his violin had a rare magical charm and attraction - *ati madhura nada.* He was one of the very early harmonists. He inherited the legacy of theoretical knowledge from his forefathers. There was an element of fascinating *avant garde* in his rendition which made him very popular, says Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar.

* * *

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NARAYANA TIRTHA SWAMIGAL — SAINT-COMPOSER:
(c. 1675 - 1745 or 1580-1680 or 1610-1705)

Venerable Narayana Tirtha is well known for his magnificent opera *Sri Krishna Līlā Taraṅgiṇi* (The River of Krishna's Sport) hailed as the longest in sanskrit. The opera commences (after invocation to Ganesa, etc.) with the birth of Sri Krishna and ends with His marriage with Rukmini divided into twelve cantos, the intermediate cantos giving succinct, enthralling description of the *lilas* of the divine child incidentally expounding advaitic truths. Tradition mentions—

Madhavanala, playwright and friend of Vikramāditya,

Bilhana (11th century), the Kashmiri brahmin who came south and is perhaps the only eminent writer with historic perceptions in the past,

Bilwamangala, the Romeo who turned ascetic and a passionate devotee of Krishna at the instance of his concubine Cintāmaṇi, and

Jayadeva (12th century), author of 'Song Celestial' — *Gita Govindam* of eternal fame

as the earlier incarnations of Tirtha. His life is full of remarkable incidents, spiritual advents, penance and prayers. Jayadeva hailed as incarnation of Sage Vyasa dealt with the *śṛiṅgāra lilas* of Krishna and *prema bhakti* of Radha while Tirtha covered the entire life of the Lord upto marriage with Rukmini. The following description follows the magnificent conclusions of B. Natarajan in respect of the life of Tirtha after wading through all available sources and records in his remarkable work *Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini.*

Narayana Tirtha (probably of the Tallavajjhula group) was a telugu brahmin born at Kaza in Guntur district as son of Nilakanta Sastri-Parvati Amma and was named Govinda Sastri. Disciple of Vasudeva Pandit, he became proficient in sastras and music and was soon married to Utchamma of Vedadri on the bank of Krishna. Caught in the swirls of River Krishna in floods while trying to reach his wife on the other side, he took to *āpat-sanyāsa* and was saved. He sought to suppress that fact but the good wife saw in him the change and with her consent he became a *sanyāsi.* He was initiated by Sivarama Tirtha at Kanchipuram and assumed the name of Narayana Tirtha. (There is another version that he was initiated by Ramananda at Varanasi.) He visited Benares, Prayag, Mathura, Puri Kucimanchi, Kuchipudi and other places and did severe penance for twelve years (a *māmāṅga,* as it is). Probably he had visited several kṣētras in Tamil Nadu including Rameswaram, Govindapuram, Tiruvisainallur, Tiruvaiyaru and Cheranmahadevi. While at Nadukaveri he had a vision about the possible cure to his physical ailment (severe stomach pain), went to Bhūpatirajapuram (called Varahur after his advent) and got relief by singing the

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opera. Ultimately he was to take *jiva samādhi* at Tiruppunturaitti, where an annual festival is regularly held on a grand scale by his devotees.

(Was crossing river Krishna in spate symbolic of crossing the ocean of *samsāra* since it had led to *vairagya* and his renunciation **at the instance of his spouse!** That the wife was instrumental to his renunciation is a remarkable fact. Mohanangi, the devadasi, was instrumental to Kṣetrajna's glory. Padmavati was the inspiration to Jayadeva's *Gita Govindam* - which made him describe himself as 'Padmavati Ramaṇa Jayadeva Kavi! In the life of Muthu Taṇdavar, a woman intervened when he was a temple servant and by divine will, a girl appeared and showed him the true path he had to follow and the mission he had to fulfil. Thrilling songs on Sri Nataraja followed. In the life of Apostle Appar (Thirunavukkarasar), sister Tilakavati was absolutely responsible to get his life revealed. But for her, he would have been one of the billions who died unhonoured, unwept and unsung. Such examples could be brought out *ad infinitum.* It had been the glory of Indian womanhood to bring up, sustain and inspire men to attain name and fame or immortality and share the joy of it! What a tradition and how total has been their self-abnegation!)

B. Natarajan opines, 'Tirtha would have composed many of his songs in the *Tarangini* wherever the places of his pilgrimage inspired him - long before his entry into Tamil Nadu as evidenced by the presence of families of his disciples at Velattur, Kuchipudi, Addanki, etc.... There could have lived in the 17/18th centuries other savants with the same appellation.' It had led scholars to suspend judgment on the authorship of works like—

Sāmkhya Kārika Vyākhyā
Sāmkhya Tatva Kaumudi Vyākhyā
Nyāya Kusumāñjali Tīkā
Yōga Sutra Vyākhyā
Siddhānta Bindu Laghu Candrikā
Vēdastava Ṭikā and *Vedānta Vibhāvana Ṭikā*

Composition: *Tarañgiṇi:*

Dr. V. Raghavan writes, 'There has been a continuous tradition of *advaitic sanyasis* cultivating both *bhakti* and *nādōpāsana.* Narayana Tirtha is an integral part of *bhajana sampradāya'.* Giving a very comprehensive treatment, B. Natarajan writes:

> *'Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini* is one of the many works that came in the wake of *Gita Govindam* and is widely acclaimed as the only one among them to have acquired and maintained a comparative status

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in the world of music...The literary and artistic content and the lilting music of Narayana Tirtha's *Taraṅgini* have charmed generations. Written in chaste and melodious sanskrit, the author had intended it to be played on the stage to the accompaniment of music and dance...the entire play was presented to enthusiastic audiences...now gone out of vogue. In 1969, Nori Narasimha Sastri observed, "Only the songs are sung now; some sing them to the accompaniment of dance; that it is mainly intended to be enacted, is almost forgotten" and expressed the hope that "some day, the dance-drama as a full- fledged play would be revived to bring out the glory and beauty of the great work as a *Dṛisyakāvya*". The musical tradition of *madhura bhakti* built up by Jayadeva was nurtured by Tirtha who raised it to new levels of excellence and spiritual merit of a very different texture.'

The *sahityas* are kirtanas with *pallavi, anupallavi* and *charanas* marvellously liaised to each other. 'It abounds in literary graces, lovely poetry, assonance and rhyme and liquid sounds which produce a happy effect of idea, sound and melody', said K.S. Ramaswami Sastri in 1969. Nori Narasimha Sastri adds:

'Verse, prose and song are effectively interspersed with narration, action, music and dance - the impact is powerful.'

'In Jayadeva, lyrical eroticism finds free expression in Rādhā Krishṇa cult. But with Paramahamsa Parivrajaka Tirtha, Radha's answer is pure *advaita vedanta* - closer in spirit and content to *Srimad Bhagavatam.'*

—B. Natarajan

The *Taraṅgiṇi* consists of 155 songs, 348 *slokas, gadyams* and *vacanas* using 39 ragas - *Khambodi* and *Nadanamakriya* with 16 each followed by *Sourashṭra* (14), *Madhyamavati* (13), *Mukhari* and *Kedaragaula* (9 each). There are narrative verses (44) *gadyams* (31) *solkattus* (to help *nṛitta*) and other delightful musical structures. As the tarangams were being sung mainly in *bhajans* later, only some songs are in currency such as *Jaya Jaya Gokula Bala, Pūraya mama kāmam, Govinda Ghaṭaya, Mādhava māmava dēva, Vikṣeham kada,* etc. After referring to Sadasiva Brahmendral, Dr.V. Raghavan states that Tirtha occupies a far more important place in the history of Carnatic music and *bhajan sampradaya.* Tirtha established at Varahur the *bhajan sampradaya* and the place became a centre of music and dance during Nayak rule. Kṣetrajna too had visited Varahur. Tirtha joins the illustrious galaxy of *bhagavata mahapuruṣas* comprising Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal, Sridhara Venkatesa Ayyaval, Sadguru Swamigal of Marudhanallur and the avadhuta Brahmendral. *Bhajans* commence with the songs of Tirtha and the Tallapaka composers.

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Acharya Sivasankara Sastri points out:

> 'While intoxicating *sringāra* is the dominant note in *Gīta Gōvindam, ātmānanda bhakti* is the keystone in *Tarangiṇi.* Tirtha scrupulously avoids in the description of *rāsa krīḍa* lustful influences *(kāmuka vyāpār).* Gopikas are devoted only to *brhmānanda.'*

Brhmānanda involves total *ātma nivēdan* and is uninhibited by time, space, gradation and other constraints. Tirtha was *'a shaṭ-darśana pāraga* - master of the six systems of philosophy', who could teach the *saguṇa* and the *nirguṇa brhman.*

Works:

Narayana Tirtha has authored many works. But owing to the adoption of the same name by other authors, doubt persists in respect of some as to the real author. The following are placed as his works on firm basis:

Pārijātāpaharaṇa (telugu yakṣagāna)
Hari Bhakta Sudhārṇava
Chandilya Bhakti Sūtra Vyākhyānam
Subhōdhini
Bhatta Bhasā Prakāsam on *Pūrva Mīmāmsa*
Pancikaraṇa Vārtika
Vivaraṇa Dipika (in the name of Nārāyaṇa Yōgin)

The ascetic in Narayana Tirtha found it not redundant to introduce facets of *śriñgāra* rasa as in —

Duet in *Madyamāvati*
Kalabhagatisobha ghanakālameghābha:

"Krishna	:	Oh damsel, who moves with the grace of a swan! Apprise me how the pleasurable things you mention are to be done.
Radha	:	...please fasten tightly my dress which has become loose.
Krishna	:	.....
Radha	:	...Please have union with me in privacy here.
Krishna	:	...Sit here in privacy and give me joy.'

Apparently such duets exude traces of honeyed *śriñgāra* but it is to be noted that it was all between innocent pre-youth Krishna and Radha. Poetic embellishment does demand addition of such spice and pickle to give audience-receptivity.

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Semmangudi Dr. Srinivasa Ayyar brought to print 45 pieces with notation. Bombay Sisters have given cassettes giving melodious expression to some of the songs of Tirtha.

Tīrtha has used his name with or without prefix-suffixes such as Gurubhakta Siva Narayana Tirtha (32 songs), Vara Narayana Tirtha (15), etc. His name, Narayana Tirtha, alone has been adopted in 43 songs.

Inspiration:

> 'Tyagaraja must have derived a great deal of inspiration from the life and works of great sanyasis like Bodhēndra, Brhmēndral and Tirtha. It is directly under the influence of the operatic compositions of Tirtha and Venkatarama Bhagavatar that Tyagaraja composed his two *natakas.* Tirtha is one of those whom Tyagaraja salutes in *Prhlada* Bhakti Vijayam.'
>
> 'The songs of Tirtha formed part of the music in which Tyagaraja's mind and imagination were soaked. Phrases of the *Tarangam* find echo in Tyagaraja's songs.' —Dr. V. Raghavan.

Tarañgam:

It is seen from 12 - Gitam 9 and sloka 22 that Rukmini's letter is read by the courier-brahmaṇa to Krishna and Krishṇa writes out his reply. Why the letter should be got read by the brahmaṇa and was not read by Him are left to conjecture. There is profuse overflow in *Taraṅgiṇi* of remarkable praises of the Lord. The final *mangaḷam* captures a glimpse of the *līlas* in (or rather does not desist from) 'noticing' that "the Lord's broad chest is anointed with the paste of *kuṁkuma* smeared on her breasts by the beautiful Lakshmi"! 'Far from suggesting mere sensuous appeal or making expressions of frank eroticism *(śṛiñgāra),* Narayana Tirtha has elevated the presentation to the level of pure *advaita vedanta* packed with gitams of rare merit, replete with *Upaniṣad*-truths... What we get is an amazing combination of *advaita* philosophy, *śriñgāra,* music and dance with a marvellously delicate and sophisticated handling and portrayal of the theme. (B. Natarajan) A specimen description of nature in IX-Gitam 9:

> 'Damsel East, having attained the supremely blissful state of union with her husband (Sun), gives vent to her early dejection and in her present happiness, makes fun of the West (which figuratively is losing contact with her husband (Sun)!'
> (So, the sun too has notionally two wives and is not wedded to *ēka-patni vṛta!*)

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There is continuous, constant exposition and focus of eternal spiritual truths in all the cantos emphasising the subtle glory of *advaita.* The eloquent and enlightening commentary of Swami Vivekananda on *Rāsa-krīḍa* runs:

> **'Who can conceive the throes of the love of gopis - the very ideal of love, love that wants nothing, love that does not even care for Heaven, love that does not care for anything in this world or in the world to come.**
>
> **'The historian who records this marvellous love of the gopis is one who was born pure, the eternally pure Suka, son of Vyasa. So long as there is selfishness in the heart, so long is love of God impossible; it is nothing but shop-keeping.... Ay, forget first the love of gold, name and fame and for this little trumpery world of ours. Then, only then, will you understand the love of the gopis, too holy to be attempted without giving up everything, too sacred to be conceived until the soul has become perfectly pure...'**

Narayana Tirtha had chosen the dazzling *līlas* of the charming and resplendent *avatār* of the Lord for his opera and chose sanskrit, while Arunachala Kavirayar chose the theme of *Ramayana* for his opera in tamil, Gopalakrishna Bharati chose the life of the apostle *Nandanar* but wove out an elevating, engrossing story around his life for his opera in tamil leaving *Prahlada Caritram* and *Nowka Caritram* to Tyagaraja to bring out a sumptuous and excellant musical feast in telugu.

Narayana Tirtha, following Sage Vyasa, does not want any tinge of inauspiciousness to occur even as the anguished gopis weep and wail for a whole night disturbed by the imminent departure of Krishna and so says **they wept in auspicious tones!** It is perhaps the hallmark of sages' absolute holiness and spiritual realisation, never to allow any percolation of inauspiciousness in divine dealings. Sonti Venkatasubbayya was among his disciples.

Festivals :

Sri Krishna Jayanti Festival is celebrated at Varahur with popular participation, the eighth day coinciding with Krishna Janmaṣṭami. A devoted melodic homage is paid by senior and junior musicians with concerts singing the inimitable *Tarangams. Tirtha's* songs form a significant part of *bhajans* and *bhagavata melas.* The only point of regret is that what was brought out as a dance-drama has now disintegrated into individual pieces ṣung at *bhajans* and selectively at concerts! Ninth day is *uriyadi mahotsava* and the tenth day

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witnesses the Celestial Wedding of Krishna with Rukmini. Uriyadi Festival *(Sikyotsavam)* has a mass appeal. A prize is tied at the top of a highly slippery pole for the devotees to climb up in the presence of the crowd and take it. Narayana Kavi (1868-1935) has authored the work *Sri Krishna Sikyotsava Prabandha.* It was thoughtful of our ancestors to have included this to associate the masses in the festival.

* * *

B. NATARAJAN — BIOGRAPHER-MUSICOLOGIST:

(b. October 21, 1921)

Place of birth	:	Pudukottai	
Father	:	Padma Sri S.R. Balasubramaniam	
Academic Qualification	:	M.A. in 1942	
Profession/Posts held	:	Chief Commercial Superintendent, Southern Railway, Madras (retired in October 1979). Director, Indian Hospitals Corporation, Madras.	
Books authored	:	*The City of the Cosmic Dance — Chidambaram*	1974
		Sri Krishna Leela Tarañgini	
		Volume I	1988
		Volume II	1990

Father, S.R. Balasubramaniam served the Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Educational Foundation, Chidambaram during 1920 - 1943 and served as Assistant Secretary, Management of Minakshi College which later blossomed into the Annamalai University with an enviable campus, enjoying the patronage of the Rajah's family. This had a profound, enlightening effect on young Natarajan and he had excellent opportunities to move with and derive inspiration from intellectual giants who thronged the inviting cultured campus. He had the understanding cooperation of his brothers in his divine intellectual pursuits.

Narayana Tirtha's *Śrī Krishna Leelā Tarañgiṇi* in sanskrit consumed his passion and satisfied his intellectual aspirations. Tirtha was one of the Five Great *Bhagavata Mahāpurushas,* others being Sadasiva Bṛhmēndrāl, Bodhēndra Swamigal, Sadguru Swamigal and Sridhara Venkatesa Ayyaval. It was a confluence of a galaxy born to propagate *Nāma Siddhānta.*

Natarajan has made extensive visits and intensive exploration to garner all available materials and correlate facts and details since the truth about the life and work of Narayaṇa Tīrtha stand, as usual in all such cases, enmeshed in a maze of confusing and conflicting details - contradictory or competing. In sifting

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the truth out of this amazing flood of books, papers, cadjan leaves, statements, legends and traditions, the author had spared no effort. He had consulted numerous scholars of repute. His translation has been lauded and hailed by all. The spiritual, prosodic, musical outpourings of Tīrtha are now placed before the world not well-versed in sanskrit. The two volumes are indeed a treasure of eternal values and excellence, well documented and edited. The intensive research of his father in the allied twin fields of Chōla temples and art should have surely equipped the author and indicated the direction of activity by equipping him with profound insight into the impressionable Indian culture and art and their impact on the vast masses who have inherited the legacy of an ancient civilization. Natarajan has earned a well-deserved niche in the vibrant hearts of the devout, the musical and the literate connoisseurs.

* * *

S.N. NATARAJAN — TEACHER / MUSICOLOGIST:

(b. December 16, 1923)

Natarajan underwent training in music for over eight years under K.C. Adivarahachariar and Prof. P. Sambamurti and came to be called 'Gāna Priya' by the learned Professor. In 1954 he went to Jaffna and was Teacher in Oriental Music in the Education Department during 1958-1984. He was in the Music panel of Art Council of Sri Lanka. Has been Editor of *Jyotiṣa Jyoti* on astrology. A good speaker and linguist. He has brought out the first volume of *Isai Natana Kalanjiam* with 2000 entries on music and dance. He had been working on the project for over eight years. The remaining six volumes are to be published.

It may be mentioned that Jaffna was a citadel of Tamil Culture. In fact, the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Ramanathaswamy temple, Rameswaram was built by Parakrama Bahu, a chieftain of Jaffna. This good environment in Jaffna then was presumably conducive to the patient labours of Natarajan.

* * *

NEELA RAMGOPAL—VOCALIST:

(b. May 25, 1935)

Place of birth	:	Madras
Father	:	Krishnaswamy, a violinist
Training in music under	:	Nedunthеru Sadagopachariar (Kumbakonam) Virudhunagar Ganapati Pillai N.M. Narayanan, Music Critic, *The Hindu* in higher nuances and theories.

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Karaikudi T.K. Rangachari at Bangalore on special items.

Neela Ramgopal improved her knowledge and expertise by constant dedicated listening of masters and has been giving concerts for All India Radio, Doordarshan, sabhas and is a popular musician. Has also specialised in group singing of devotionals under auspices of Sadguru Sangita Samiti. She is the recipient of awards from reputed organisations.

P

PADMACHARAN (A.V. KRISHNAMACHAR) — VIOLINIST:

(b. April 21, 1920)

Padmacharan is the popular name by which A.V. Krishnamachar is known for long - presumably inspired by the honorific *Padmavati Chārana* Chakravarti of Jayadēva.

Birth	:	Asuri family of Gutti in Andhra Pradesh.
Parents	:	Viraraghavacharyulu and Janakamma.

The parents were good singers and kannada lullabies and *Dasarapadagalu* of the mother whipped up the innate musical instincts of the child. She had suckled the child with the milk of music and later the *harikatha* of Rama Sastri of Mulugund acted as a catalyst. Padmacharan stopped his scholastic studies with Intermediate at College and underwent training in music with Penukonda Pallavi Pucca Hanumanthachar, Amidala Venkatasami, Venkappa and B. Venkatappa in both vocal and violin. An irresistible urge to learn led him to take Hindustani music and also Western music from Divyanathan of Mysore Palace Symphony. He had specialised coaching under the eminent Rallapalle Anantakrishna Sarma.

Fully equipped with all-round training, Padmacharan has been giving competent and well-acclaimed accompaniment to top musicians and solos, both Carnatic and Hindustani. Two decades of training equipped him with multi-directional knowledge and expertise and it is said that he is 'Ekalavya to the Drona in Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu'. His bowing is perfect, the tone is sweet and appealing and the music that flows out of it is gripping.

Padmacharan has specialised in *yakshagānas,* drama and film music. He has led a troupe to publicise Yaksharanga in Europe, United Kingdom, etc. He has been having appearances in Doordarshan, All-India Radio, sabhas and festivals. When he was drafted into All India Radio, Mysore in 1949, he introduced many

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innovative programmes and *bhava gitas.* Has contributed articles to *'Praja Mata'.* He is described as *moola purusha* to *sugam sangit* in Karnataka. Raghusuta, in his book *Sunada,* gives extensive coverage to the life of the artiste.

Honours & Titles :

Honours from Rabhindra Kalakshetra	1994
Sangita Kala Ratna by Bangalore Gayana Samaja	
Karnataka Kala Tilaka by Karnataka Nrtya Academy	1986

Has given cassette recordings.

* * *

Dr. T.N. PADMA — PEDAGOGUE: (b. April 23, 1949)

Place of birth	:	Mysore, the nursery of musicians.
Parents	:	T. Narasimha Sastry / Subbulakshamma
Academic Qualification	:	M. Music, B.Ed., Ph.D (1996) Music Senior Grade.
Training in music under	:	Prof. V. Ramaratnam Prof. B.S. Vijayaraghavan Prof. Gowri Kuppuswamy Prof. M.V. Ratna & Susheelamma.
Posts held	:	Lecturer, Supernumerary Reader & Selection-Grade Lecturer, University College of Fine Arts, Mysore (since 1974)

Dr. Padma has given concerts and is an artiste with All India Radio. Her thesis (to be published) is *Sri Tyagarajara Kritigalalli Sangita Mattu Bhakti - Ondu Adhyayana.*

* * *

B.K. PADMANABHA RAO — COMPOSER: (1903 - 1966)

Father	:	Mysore B. Krishna Rao, an Advocate.
Studied music under	:	Veena Shivaramiah, Bakshi Subbanna, Muthiah Bhagavatar and Chikka Rama Rao at the Royal School of Music, Mysore. Then under Mysore Vasudevachar.
Publications	:	Compositions of Mysore Sadasiva Rao and Veena Subbanna. Haridasa Kirtanas in four volumes with notations
Compositions	:	13 varnams and 30 kritis under signature 'Padmaja'. Has composed in rare ragas. Tillanas in *Behag, Gambheera Nata* and *Devagandhari.* His compositions were published by his disciples in a book titled *Sangita Choodamani'.*

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Padmanabha Rao was giving concerts, teaching students without any remuneration and conducting music conferences and festivals. A spiritual soul, he helped many good causes and students and founded 'Lakshmi Sadana' to provide a good school of music. Was a Government Examiner.

Sri Tyagaraja Sangita Sabha, Mysore held a festival in honour of this composer in December 1994.

* * *

MAHADANAPURAM K. PANCHAPAKESA BHAGAVATAR — HARMONIST: (b. April 25, 1915)

Place of birth	:	Mahadanapuram
Parents	:	Krishna Bhagavatar - Muthulakshmi
Post held	:	Worked in the school run by South Indian Music Academy, Delhi 1944-45 Worked in the school run by South India Club, Calcutta. 1945-46 & 1955 Part-time Lecturer, Rabhindra Bharati 1965-77

Education stopped with the elementary school. Young Panchapakesan desired to learn vocal music but his father placed him under the distinguished violinist, Karur Chinnaswami Ayyar as the violinist was known to him and as Karur was nearby. Five years of *gurukulavasa* with the Karur maestro gave him the opportunity to follow him to most of his concerts and learn musical wisdom but no practical performing experience or knowledge. On the demise of his father in 1931, Bhagavatar came under the tutelage of Harmonist C.V. Narasinga Rao, a disciple of Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar.

Panchapakesa Bhagavatar has spent his life as a tutor and has immense aptitude for humorous exposition. I have myself recorded one of such expositions done by him at pages 326-7 of *Yet Another Garland.* Luck would seem to have eluded him in his professional life.

Sundaraja Memorial Trust, Madras honoured him at its annual celebrations in 1995.

* * *

PAPPU CHANDRA SEKHAR — VAINIKA: (b. May 12, 1958)

Place of birth	:	Hyderabad
Parents	:	Pappu Someswara Rao, Veena Lecturer (Retired), Government Music & Dance College, Hyderabad and Bhanumati
Academic Qualification	:	Commerce Graduate
Musical training under	:	Father & Guru Pappu Someswara Rao (from his seventh year)

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Debut	:	Hyderabad in 1972
Occupation	:	'A' grade veena staff artist, All India Radio, Hyderabad
Concert tour abroad	:	U.S.A.
Titles & Honours	:	Veena Nada Sudharnava, Emani Memorial Award and Best Veena Artiste (Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras)

Pappu Chandra Sekhar states that he hails from a traditional scholarly family of musicians of Vizianagaram which has had an immense musical environment. 'Who would go out for ghee keeping butter on hand', says the proverb. When father is a renowned vainika, Sekhar had no need to go out, though there is a belief that a beloved father could not instil in his son enough of learning as a stranger-guru could. Sekhar has inherited the traditional *gayaki* style and has been giving numerous concerts and has won laurels. Sekhar's veena rendition is availed of for conferences and festivals also.

Has given cassettes.

* * *

S. PRAKASH — MRIDANGIST: (b. September 12, 1948)

Parents	:	Satyanarayanamurti & Prasannakumari
Academic Qulification	:	Bachelor of Commerce
Musical training under	:	K.U. Krishnamani C. Subbu M.L. Virabhadriah Got first rank in Vidwan examination
Publications	:	Sangita Kalaravinda (in two parts) Tatvagana Ratnakara
Titles	:	Vachana Gayana Vibhusana, Harmonium Prapurna → from Nidumandi Matam Sangita Sagara from Rambhapuram Matam Gayana Vachana Catura during Hanumat Jayanti, Mysore.

Prakash commenced his career by providing mridangam accompaniment to his mother's concert and enjoys since then very good practice. He got a job in the Karnataka State Sangita Nataka Academy. He has been providing percussion support to top artistes at important centres. He has been presenting articles on theory of laya, etc., under the *nom de plume* 'Uragachala'. He is very felicitous in playing on harmonium.

* * *

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K.R.S. PRASANNA — MUSICIAN & DANSEOLOGIST:

(b. Feby 11, 1967)

Parents	:	Vidwan Raghusutha and K.R. Padmaja
Academic Qualification	:	B.E., M.S. Natya Vidwan (KSEE Board, Karnataka) Senior Carnatic Music Examination
Training	:	In Carnatic music under: Chintlapalli Krishnamurti Mathur R. Shankaramurti In bharatanatyam under: Lalita Srinivasan

The artistic talents of Prasanna, who enjoys a pleasant and pleasing personality, are devoted to bharatanatyam since his debut in 1984 and furthering its cause by composing and tuning. He has set to music dance dramas like *Subhadra Parinaya* (sanskrit, kannada and hindi), *Bali Mokṣa* (sanskrit and kannada) and many others including *Śilappadikāram* in tamil. He is reputed to be the first to compose music to kannada poems of great masters and choreograph them. He is sure to have a great future.

A twenty-four hour non-stop bharatanaryam in 1986 stands to his credit.

Composition	:	Jatiswara, Pushpanjali and Tillanas.
Tours	:	England, France, USA and Europe
Titles :		
Bharatnatya Samrat	from Pratibharanga, Shimoga	1988
Bharata Kalabhushana	from Rajakumar Abhimanigala Sangha, Vijayanagara	1989
Natya Shiromani	from Pampa Kannada Koota, Michigan	1990

* * *

N.R. PRASHANTH — VOCALIST: (b. December 11, 1967)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Parents	:	N.K. Ramaprasanna & K. Godavari
Training in music under	:	R.K. Padmanabha (Vocalist) R. Neyveli Santanagopalan M. Rukminiammal of Bangalore M.A. Narasimhachariar (Special coaching) Title Krishna Iyengar (Special coaching)
Academic Qualification	:	B.E. (Instrumentation)
Debut	:	1984 at Ganesha Temple, Bangalore.

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Prashanth has been giving concerts for All India Radio and at important centres. A ceaseless devotee of music, he has come out with credit at musical contests. He enjoys a pleasant voice. A talented upcoming artiste, Prashanth has great faith in his attaining the top slot and is among the rich crop of bright young artistes in Classical Carnatic music which Bangalore has presented.

* * *

PRATAPA SIMHA—COMPOSER: (1739 - 1763)

Son of Tulaja I called Tukkoji (1728 - 1736 reign) and Annapurna (described as Sword Wife), Pratapa Simha was a distinguished ruler at Thanjavur. 'He has the distinction of having composed 12 plays in marathi on Puranic themes. It is claimed that he used the raga *Ananda Bhairavi* in a marathi drama for the first time.' (B. Natarajan) (It is seen that there was another Pratapa Simha at Tiruvidaimarudur who was a composer, musician and mridangist.)

Muddu Palani, noted for her proficiency in Bharata Sastra, wrote the erotic work *Radhika Santvanamu* and *Saptapadlu.* Melattur Virabhadrayya, architect of *svarajati,* etc., Ramaswami Dikshitar, father of Muthuswami Dikshitar, Matrubhuta Kavi, author of *Pārijātāpaharana Nātaka,* etc., belonged to this period.

R

RADHIKA BASKAR — VAINIKA : (b. May 18, 1969)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Parents	:	S. Ramanathan who hailed from Umayalpuram and Savitri
Qualification	:	B.Com. Passed Senior Examination in Music of Karnataka State.
Debut	:	State Youth Centre, Bangalore in 1985
Musical training under	:	C. Shyamprakash, C. Nagaraj and C. Krishnamurti, sons of Dr. M. Cheluvarayaswamy, the last being a disciple of Dr. V. Doreswamy Iyengar. Takes instruction now from T.N. Seshagopalan

Radhika Baskar, has been giving solo performances for All India Radio, sabhas, etc. She has secured numerous medals and prizes. She has shifted her sphere of activity from industrial Bangalore to the cultural centre, Madras.

* * *

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RAGHUSUTHA (K.R. RANGACHAR) — MUSICOLOGIST:

(b. May 8, 1929)

Place of birth	:	Chikballapur, Kolar district
Parents	:	Raghunathachar & Indiramma
Musical training under	:	B.R. Govindaswamy, a good violinist
Academic Qualification	:	Master of Arts
Post held	:	Principal, Government College, Chikballapur and retired in 1984
Publications	:	Carnatic Musicians of Old Mysore State in 1956 Sunada in 1994

Raghusutha is reputed to be the first art critic in music and dance in Karnataka. He has contributed numerous articles on Carnatic music and musicians and has given lecture-demonstrations. Has been the art critic for many magazines and kannada newspapers.

He founded the Purandara Gana Sabha, Chikballapur and the Tyagaraja Gana Sabha, Bangalore. Was member of many committees set up by government.

He has founded the Shantala Arts Academy and organises its annual festival for the last ten years with enthusiasm and earnestness. A dedicated musical soul, he enjoys good rapport with musicians. His sons are also dedicated votaries of Art. Raghusutha was of immense help in introducing the *Garlands* in Karnataka.

* * *

N.G. RAJAGOPALAN — BHAGAVATA: (b. September 14, 1928)

Place of birth	:	Nemmara, Palghat district.
Parents	:	N.P. Gopalakrishna Ayyar & Parvati Ammal
Employment	:	Retired in 1980 from Government of India (Audit Department)

A fanatic faith in the efficacy of *Nāma Sañkīrtana* - congregational singing - and the unprecedented supreme popularity of *bhajans* in Maharashtra led Rajagopalan to become a staunch votary of *bhajans* since 1954 for his own spiritual advancement and the salvation of mankind. The celebration of the Jayanti of Sri Bhagawan Nāma Bodhendral in that year under his preceptors T.S. Ramadurai and Tiruppugaḷ Pappa opened up his innate urge for *nāma sañkirtan* and drew him into the thick of *bhajans*. He is proud of the fact that

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during the decade 1961-1970, five hundred bhajans were conducted on auspicious occasions at Bombay. Wherever there was an occasion and opportunity for *bhajan,* Rajagopalan was there. That was the intensity of his commitment and dedication.

Sri Ayyappaswami Movement presented him a happy and enlarging opportunity to give full vent to his capabilities and urges. And his *bhajans* have been so popular that different cities invited him to conduct the *seva.* Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi was much pleased with his ardour and dedication that he asked him to render special *bhajans* to inspire the youth and blessed him.

Rajagopalan takes pleasure to perform *bhajans* not only at Govindapuram, but at many orphanages to the delight of the unfortunate inmates. A band of enlightened youngsters follow him with music and percussion and it is a grand soulful experience. One sees emotional integration with the cause at his *bhajans.* He says that his dedication was not without merit and that when landed in a hospital and a hefty bill of Rs.27000 faced him, a stranger-admirer had silently paid off the amount for him! *'Yōgakṣēmam vahāmyaham'* stands proved, Rajagopalan avers.

A humane, dedicated votary of *Nāma sañkīrtan,* Rajagopalan's *bhajan* is thrilling and enthralling and he draws on the compositions of the maestros of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, etc. And all that, without being tainted by any *quid pro quo.*

* * *

LALGUDI R. RAJALAKSHMI — VIOLINIST: (b. November 5, 1939)

Place of birth	:	Lalgudi, Tiruchirapalli district.
Names of parents	:	V.R. Gopala Iyer & Savitri Ammal
Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts (Music)
Musical Training under	:	Lalgudi V.R. Gopala Ayyar, father - musician Lalgudi Jayaraman, brother and violin-maestro
Debut	:	At Kapaliswara Temple, Mylapore in 1949
Post held	:	Staff Artist, All India Radio since 1983.

Lalgudi, Saint Tyagaraja brought it to special focus with his *'Lalgudi Pancharatna'* songs. The place is also called Tapastirthapuram, Tiruttavatturai and Sripuram. V.R. Gopala Ayyar was in the disciple-line of Tyagaraja and

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Lalgudi Jayaraman is a Kala Sagara of lavish image, immense repute and high international standing among musicians and composers. (Lalgudi family is fully brought out in *Another Garland.*) Thus Rajalakshmi was born amidst the unique affluence of absolute classical music, which is a gift of God. No wonder she was able to perform at the age of ten. The Lalgudi family is a bee-hive of violinists and Rajalakshmi has the distinction of carrying the brand-name 'Lalgudi' which stands for excellence in melody and has been giving solos and accompanying distinguished vocalists. Has been giving duet concerts with her sister, Srimati Brahmanandam. A prominent violinist based in Bangalore, she has good rapport with her audience and a vast circle of disciples in vocal, violin and veena. Her students have made a mark in India and abroad. Rajalakshmi has many musical features to her credit and has conducted vadya vrindas for All India Radio. Has given cassettes.

Concert tours : Japan, Malaysia & Singapore.

* * *

NALLAR RAJALAXMI — VEENA ARTISTE (b. 1917)

Parents : T. Srinivasa Iyengar, Ayurvedic/Homeopathic doctor and Alamelamma.

Training in music under : Initially her father who played sitar
Chennakeshaviah
Venkatagiriappa when Doreswami Iyengar and Ranganayaki Parthasarati were also learning.

Rajalaxmi was married while quite young into a traditional orthodox family. While there was ample musical environment, she could not think of giving concerts. She lives in the world of music after a long gap of 15-20 years cherishing the memory of her great guru, Venkatagiriappa and her ancestral intellectual and musical heritage. Presumably, the flow of melody in her had been bunded, blocked and immobilised in its flowering stages for a long but an interim period.

* * *

Dr. BALANTRAPU RAJANIKANTHA RAO — MUSICIAN/COMPOSER: (b. January 29, 1920)

Place of birth : Nidadavolu, Andhra Pradesh

Father : Kavirajahamsa Balantrapu Venkata Rao

Academic Qualification : B.A. (Hons.)

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Training in music under	:	Manda Krishnamurti	
Posts held	:	Script writer & Staff Artiste, All India Radio, Madras (July, 1942).	
		Promoted finally as Station Director (1970), Ahmedabad, Vijayawada, Bangalore and retired in 1978.	
		Special Officer/Director, Sri Venkateswara Kalapitham, Tirupati (1979 - 82)	
		Visiting Professor, Post-Graduate Centre of Telugu, Viswavidyalaya, Bommuru (AP) - November 1988 to April 1990.	
Books Published Telugu works—	:	*Satapatrasundari - Collection of his lyrics*	1953
		Andhra Vāggēyakāra Charitra	
		Jejimamayya Patalu - Collection of his lyrics, etc.	
		Viswaveena - Collection of his opera- dance dramas	
		Tyagarajaswami - Biography	1978
		Syama Sastri - Biography	1983
English works	:	Alone with the Spouse Divine *Ksetrayya* *Muvvagopala Padavali*	

Composition: Dance-Drama Plays :

Kalyana Srinivasan
Sri Krishna Saranam Mama
Vijayostu te Nari
Yakshaganas and lyrics of varied hues.

The rich exposure, multi-pronged handling of themes and schemes relating to music and dance in All India Radio in the background of the rich Telugu Musical Panorama helped Rajanikantha Rao to prominently bring to fore his innate artistic instincts and talents and put them to effective and purposive use. Composing lyrics and lyrical plays was his hobby even in his teens and this took him to the varied assignments in All India Radio. Rajani, his pen-name, became a popular bye-word in Andhra Pradesh and his tunes gathered high appreciation. A restless soul, he has been a successful musician, playwright, broadcaster and poet. Composition of lyrics, *yakshaganas,* etc. presenting special lectures at various forums, demonstrations and collaboration with others in taking up music-dance projects are the favourite pastime of the tireless Doctor. A musical soul, he is a colourful multi-faceted personality absolutely dedicated to popularising music and dance.

Honours & Titles :

Rajanikantha Rao has won many awards from various institutions like:

Telugu Bhasha Samiti Award	
Central Sahitya Academy Award	1961
Nippon Hoso Kyorai, Tokyo prize for his 'Mountain to the Sea' on River Godavari in	1972
Hony Doctor of Letters - Kala Prapurna by Andhra University, Waltair in	1980
Nadasudharnava by Murali Ravali Art Academy, Madras in	1981

* * *

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P. RAMAA — VOCALIST: (b. September 1, 1954)

Place of birth	:	Mysore, the musical cradle
Parents	:	P. Gopalakrishnan & Indira (M.K. Saraswati, the vainika artiste, is her aunt.)
Training in music under	:	T.R. Srinivasan Nagamani Srinath and Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan
Academic Qualification	:	M.A.(Music) of the Mysore University
Debut	:	At the Dasara Exhibition, Mysore in 1962
Concert tours abroad	:	Switzerland 1986 & 1995
Post held	:	Staff Artiste, All India Radio, Bangalore.

Ramaa is 'A' grade artiste in Classical Carnatic, Light Classical and Light music with All India Radio. She enjoys a melodious voice and very elegantly brings out the *sahitya* and *sangita bhavas* as she sings. She has been giving concerts for All India Radio, Television, sabhas, etc. A popular artiste.

* * *

TILLAISTHANAM RAMA AYYANGAR—PATRIARCH & TYAGA SEVA BHAKTA: (19th cent.)

The holy Cauvery hailed as 'Rajarajeswari' by Tyagaraja branches off into numerous rivers embracing the entire Thanjavur district, etc. Of them all, only some like Vennar, Vettar and Kudamurutti are very prominent. Even so, Tyagaraja had about thirty *śiṣyas* but of them, the primary and major planets, viz., disciple-lines, were those of

i. Tillaisthanam Rama Ayyangar & Srinivasa Ayyangar

ii. Umayalpuram Krishna Bhagavatar & Sundara Bhagavatar and

iii. Wallajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar & Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar.

The latter two sets of disciples have been covered in *A Garland.* (Why the first comes last, one may wonder. The reason is that they hailed from an adjacent village and were very close to the Bard-*antaraṅga śiṣyas.* So they tarry a little more after bidding farewell to the other who came from far-off places!)

Rama Ayyangar and Srinivasa Ayyangar were brothers. Rama Ayyangar was very close to his guru and was constantly with him in his last days. He hailed from Tillaisthanam or Tiruneithanam, just a mile off Tiruvaiyaru. He was blest with a conjuring voice. 'He inherited not only a substantial part of Tyagaraja's music but also the humility and devotion of the saint' and he

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declined several gifts from well-meaning admirers (K.N. Srinivasan). The bard encouraged him much. Ayyangar was an expert in the *alapana* of *pratimadyama ragas* like *Kalyani.*

Rama Ayyangar is reported to have taken the lead in performing the last rites to his guru (who entered on *sanyasa* in his last days) ably assisted by Umayalpuram disciples. And when the Umayalpuram Brothers left for their village where they continued the annual *ārādhana (śrāddha)* to Tyagaraja, Rama Ayyangar with his prime, renowned disciples, Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panju Bhagavatar, continued the rites at Tiruvaiyaru and it has become a perennial river ever since and the rites are performed to this day. The exclusive right and privilege to do the *adhiṣṭāna puja* by Tillaisthanam Śiṣya Paramapara has been judicially recognised.

Lakshminarayana Ayyar alias Chellam Ayyar of the *parampara* now arranges for the *ārādhana* and *adhiṣṭāna puja* with a massive feeding on all the celebration days at Tiruvaiyaru thus upholding the spiritual devotion and dedication of Tillaisthanam *Parampara.* Chellam Ayyar, in the footsteps of the renowned Annadana Sivan of Tepperumanallur, conducts the mass-feeding with genuine passion. The *ārādhana* (the religious rites) was presumably done at the house of Tyagaraja till 1855 and later at the *samadhi* site.

There was presumably no musical concerts at the *samadhi* earlier till Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panju Bhagavatar started them in 1908 — another feather to the Tillaisthanam *Parampara!*

The different schools of *śiṣya paramparas* have differing styles of rendition of many songs of the bard.

Rama Ayyangar was a harikatha exponent. The kalakṣēpa trail-blazer, Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar was his disciple. What was Tyagaraja to his disciples? They would have averred, 'We dare not confess ourselves as his disciples. That would be unfair to the saintly *vāggēyakāra.* We believe that no other person has written the truth in matters of art and life, religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding'.

What was the nature of love and respect the disciples had to their guru? To quote Ananda Coomaraswami's words given for a different purpose, **'The most perfect love seeks nothing for itself, requires nothing and offers nothing to the beloved, realizing his infinite perfection which cannot be added to'.** It was all the mutual divine relationship between Krishna and Radha, Krishna and gopis -

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pure, perfect, unpolluted, devoted and divine. To serve the master, that was the sum, substance and goal to them! The 'self' stood wiped out!

* * *

T.K. RAMACHANDRAN, I.A.S.—VOCALIST & VAINIKA: (b. Septr. 7, 1965)

Place of birth	:	Madras
Parents	:	T.S. Krishnamoorti & Leela Krishnamoorti.
Academic Qualification	:	M.Tech (Computer)
Musical training	:	Initial exposure came from his mother. Nagpur Parvathiammal initiated him in veena play. Presently he takes periodic coaching from Chitraveena maestro Ravi Kiran and his father, the genial Narasimhan. Had taken lessons from T.K. Govinda Rao, then Chief Producer, All India Radio, Delhi, Sangita Kalanidhi T. Brinda, Padmaja Srinivasan and Rama Ravi.

As against the impressive list of gurus, Ramachandran has found in the tape recorder his constant and 'biggest guru' since this accommodative guru respects his inclinations, timings, moods and tastes!

Ramachandran has been giving performances at different centres of India and is a strict votary of classicism and traditional presentation. The Civil Services had presented many distinguished musicians like C.V. Narasimhan and connoisseurs like G. Venkateswaran and S.Y. Krishnaswamy. T.K. Ramachandran has a vast field and unlimited opportunities to make an indelible mark in the sphere of Carnatic music. Presently he is Additional Collector (Development), Coimbatore.

* * *

SRIKANTAN RAMĀKĀNTH — VOCALIST: (b. Novr. 18, 1950)

Native Place	:	Rudrapatnam
Father	:	Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan
Musical training under	:	Father R.K. Srinkantan Uncle R.K. Venkatarama Sastri
Academic Qualification	:	M.Sc.
Occupation	:	Lecturer in Biology. Had done research in plant breeding as a Research Fellow at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore

Ramakanth has a rich, gamaka-conscious voice and his rendition is pleasing and satisfying. He carries the rich heritage of his musical family of Rudrapatnam

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in which music is the staple with father and paternal uncle as prominent artistes of repute. Ramakanth has given numerous concerts at important centres and is 'A' grade artiste with All India Radio.

Perhaps he may be tempted to take up research with his twin qualifications in music and botany. Pondicherry Government and Annamalai University did some researches. Jagadish Chandra Bose did much. Who knows what Ramakanth cannot achieve? He could take up the challenge as he has legacy, melodious voice, musical experience and agricultural know-how.

Concert tours	:	U.K. & Switzerland 1989; U.K. 1993.
Honours	:	Sangita Kala Pravina besides Awards.

In an article, Ramakanth has given expression to some points (which are valid in respect of many other young vidwans emerging from traditionally musical families):

> 'Growing up with a celebrity father is an experience that is as debilitating as it is exhilarating.. worked for me both positively and negatively...Coming to terms with the disparity between his old-fashioned values upholding tradition and the contemporary trends has been an excruciatingly difficult exercise. My father is an epitome of perfection in art and life...Considering that I pursue two parallel careers - as a college lecturer and as a concert musician—...I am unable to maintain the kind of rigorous schedule my father keeps up.
>
> 'Father favours full-throated singing but it does not suit my endowments and it is not relished by present-day audience too. I have moulded my music to suit contemporary tastes. But my predicament is that my personal acumen and accomplishments are overlooked by saying, "Oh, he's Srikantan's son, after all".
>
> 'Today, there are more opportunities; money and power play a crucial role; there is cut-throat competition; organisers and sponsors allow themselves to be guided by considerations that are counter to artistic merits....I will be the last person to compromise on principles.'
>
> — *Sruti* 134 - October 95

ANOOR RAMAKRISHNA — VIOLIN MAESTRO: (November 26, 1931 – February, 1995)

'Snēha Para, Srjana Śeela, Sisya Priya, Rasika, Mitabhāṣi, Maha Sadhaka, Samartha Solo Vādaka, Pakka Vādya Nipuna, Vainika, Gāyaka, Kolalu vadaka, Sampradāya Sangita Maestro...'

So goes the *aṣtōttara nāmāvalī* on Anoor Ramakrishna compiled by writer Raghusutha in *'Sunada'*. The artiste deserved all these for his scholarship, teaching acumen, musical expertise and stature in Karnataka music circles.

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There was music in the family and Ramakrishna rose up to the top easily guided by his devotion, dedication and innate qualities of penetrating clarity. Father Shyamanna was a State Government officer and a vainika. Grandfather Subbaraya Sastri was also a vainika. Strangely young Ramakrishnan took to mridangam under M.L. Veerabhadriah and violin under Ratnagiri Subba Sastri who handled a seven-stringed violin like Chowdiah and a few others. Ramakrishna was blessed with detailed instructions and expertise under them. Then he came under the disciplinarian and eminent violinist, R.R. Keshavamurti. Anoor Ramakrishna made his debut in 1961 providing accompaniment to Tanjore M. Theagarajan, now a Sangita Kalanidhi. Since then, he was providing capable accompaniment and giving solo concerts.

Whether it was *raga alapana,* kriti, *swara* delineation or *bhava-raga-tala* rendition or *sahitya*-conscious presentation, Anoor excelled in each and every segment and sphere and had carved out a distinct style of his own. His teaching methods attracted the praise of stalwarts and he drew out the best in his disciples who adored him. Tyagaraja sang, *'Dorakuna ituvanti sēva' (Bilahari).* Probably disciples of Ramakrishna sing, *'Dorakunā ituvanti guruvu!* - can we get such a guru elsewhere? A much sought-after violinist, he had graced numerous concerts with mastery and delightful play. He had presented Multi-Violin Symphonies and Laya Lahari Symphonies. Musical presentation of the lives of Rama, Krishna and Tyagaraja with songs of Tyagaraja, etc. was another worthy endeavour of his. Conscious of the fact that the future of Carnatic music lies in the hands of youth, he encouraged them.

Posts held : Joined the Iyanar College of Music, Bangalore in 1953 and continued as its Honorary Principal.

When the Faculty of Sangita-Nrtya was established in Bangalore University in 1973, Ramakrishna became Lecturer and continued till superannuation in 1991.

Honours & Titles :

Sosale Vyasaraya Math - Nadasudha Visarada	1959
Citizens of Mysore - Violin Vada Praveena	1970
Honours from Manjunatha Karnataka Sangita Sala,	1981
Edaniru Math and Hamsadhwani Sangita Sabhal (and others in 1991, 1992, 1994)	1982 1984
Tyagaraja Sangita Sabha - Sangita Samrat	1986
Karnataka Government - Rajyotsava Award	1991
Adarsh Bharatiya Samsad - Gayana Laya Samrat	1991

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Malleswaram Tyagaraja Gana Sabha—Gana Kala Bhushana	1993
Bangalore Bhajana Sabha—Kala Jyoti	1993
Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore—Laya Kala Nipuna	1993
Karnataka Sangita Nrtya Academy Karnataka Kala Tilaka	1993

Concert tour abroad : U.K. in 1986

Anoor Ramakrishna had presented delectable music with A. Virabhadriah and H.V. Krishnamurti - hailed as Janapriya Violin Trinity of Karnataka. Hailing from Hunasemaradahalli in a musical family, Ramakrishna had delighted his innumerable fans with his toneful, sweet, fragrant, heart-warming and soul-filling bowing for three decades and over building up a reputation that is high. His sons, Hirianna Dattatreya and Ramakrishna are mridangists.

* * *

KULATHUR RAMAKRISHNA SASTRI — VAINIKA:

(b. October 10, 1916)

Ramakrishna Sastri is vainika, teacher, writer, musicologist all in one. Son of Kulathur Visweswara Sastri, he had his —

Training in music under	:	Naranappa, Ratnagiri Subba Sastri and L. Raja Rayaru. He also studied at the Music College.
Occupation	:	Teacher in Corporation School during 1943-1974 Examiner for Music at Government Examinations.
Publications	:	*Gāna Sāstra Prakāsika* (2 parts) Rama Matya's *Swara Mela Kalanidhi*—Translation into Kannada

He has been contributing articles to *Gayana Ganga*, a magazine.

* * *

SIR C.V. RAMAN — NOBEL LAUREATE and MUSICAL SCIENTIST:

(November 7, 1888 - November 21, 1970)

It was an agricultural family of Porasakudi originally. Intellectual activity took them out of the rural environment in Thanjavur district. Porasakudi is close to musical Mangudi and Nataka mela fame Melattur. The cultural capital of the South, Thanjavur is nearby. Grandfather Ramanathan was a scholar in tamil and was in the Financial Civil Service. Father Chandrasekharan, a graduate in

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Physics, was Lecturer in SPG College, Tiruchirapalli and AVN College, Visakhapattinam teaching Physics, Mathematics and Physical Geography. A good sportsman, Chandrasekharan was a violinist. His wife, Parvati was daughter of Saptarishi Sastriar of Tiruvanaikaval, a sanskrit scholar. Elder brother, C. Subramaniam (well-known as C.S. Ayyar and born in 1886) belonged to the Indian Audit and Accounts Service and was Member of the Board of Studies for Indian Music, Madras University. He had conducted scientific experiments with musical instruments, was himself a violinist and had authored The *Grammar of South Indian Music* and *My Musical Extravaganza.* Vidyasankar, the eminent vainika, is his daugher and Nobel Laureate S. Chandrasekhar was his son. It was in this intellectual home and musical ocean that Sir C.V. Raman was born at Tiruvanaikaval of Chandrasekharan-Parvati Ammal.

The boy excelled in studies; was a Matriculate at fifteen (1903), a Bachelor of Arts at sixteen (1904) from the Presidency College, a M.A. at eighteen and was certified by his teacher as:

> 'The best student I had seen in thirty years' and
> 'A young man of independence and strength of character.'

Frail Raman was not considered physically fit to make the trip to England for studies or to sit for Indian Civil Service Examination. He stood first in the Financial Civil Services Examination and was posted at the age of 19 as Assistant Accountant General, Calcutta. Later he served at Singapore, Nagpur, etc. He did researches simultaneously at IACS, Calcutta. He drew inspiration from diverse sources like:

> Hermann von Helmboltz's *Sensations of Tone* which laid the foundation for his researches in accoustics and
>
> Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* which inspired him to be an idealist.

Awards, medals, honours, titles flowed in rhythmic sequence and quite soon, he joined the all-time Gallery of the Galaxy of Great Scientists. How the two works cited influenced him, he clarifies thus:

> 'A purposeful life needs an axis or hinge - this hinge has been, in my own case, strangely enough, not the love of science, not even the love of Nature; but a certain abstract of idealism or belief in the value of the human spirit and the virtue of human endeavour and achievements.'
>
> 'Helmholtz's work profoundly influenced my intellectual outlook.'

The year 1907 was a landmark not only in Raman's official life when he took up his first posting as Assistant Accountant General but at home too as he got married. During one of his visits to her home, Lokasundari was singing and playing on veena the song of Tyagaraja-

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Rāma nī samānamevaru? (Kharaharapriya)
(Is there any peer to You, Rama? Sita, the tender wife of Yours is like the fragrance of the plant marukozhundu, enveloped in her *bhakti* for you...)

Raman offered to marry her without dowry and he did. Little Raman and tiny Lokasundari travelled to Calcutta soon! Who was *sangita* and who was *sahitya?* Music and music alone settled the wedding. *Nāda* took hold of Raman and his keen eye and ear found far-reaching phenomena :

> '...his papers on the bowed string, the struck string, maintenance of vibrations, resonance, aerial waves, sound of splashes, singing flame, music from heated metals...'
>
> —S. Ramaseshan

At one of his lectures at Madras, he spoke on musical instruments ; C.S. Ayyar played on violin for the demonstration. The audience sat spellbound enslaved by his booming voice, chaste diction and superb humour. 'Starting as a soloist, he quickly became a superb conductor of a grand orchestra.' His contributions to the physics of violin are summarised by G. Venkataraman as under:

i. Extension of Helmholtz's ideas to the other modes of vibration;
ii. Study of the wolf-note;
iii. Role of friction between the bow and the string;
iv. Influences of the bridge and
v. Measurement of the frequency response of the violin (Raman's Expanse Curge).

He did experiments on piano, tambura and vina, mridangam and tabla. He availed of the play of Palghat Mani Ayyar on mridangam and Pavagada Thathachariar on violin taking them to his laboratory to experiment on the impact of sounds on water, etc. He said:

> **'All Instruments of percussion (of the West) are essentially non-musical; can only be tolerated in open-air music or in large orchestra. But Indian musical instruments...effect is excellent...excellent acoustic properties.'**

Raman had investigated into the physical theory of musical instruments of the violin family, harmonic content of veena and the sound of the drum apart from his purely scientific probes. He got the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1930. Raman's Effect, Raman's Lines, Raman Spectrum, etc. remind the work and achievement of the eminent scientist, a great musical soul and one who fought his way by sheer will and persistence. He was one of the turbanned Indian maestri and

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wizards who brought name and respect to his country like Sir S. Radhakrishnan, who once lamented the disappearance of turbans and perhaps the scholarly eminence which they signified. 'India lost not only a great scientist, but also perhaps the most celebrated symbol of an austere and noble tradition', regretted A. Ranganathan lamenting the death of Raman.

It was at the grounds of the P.S. High School, Mylapore in the thirties or so he was to deliver a lecture. He stood taller than most of others reminiscent of the great orators of history and gave an exhilarating, enlightening lecture waiving aside the use of the mike.

* * *

Dr. S.V. RAMANAKUMAR — PEDAGOGUE: (b. May 7, 1949)

Parents	:	Sangita Vidwan B.L. Surappa Garu & B.S. Kamalamma
Academic Qualification	:	M.A. in Kannada from Mysore University Proficiency Examination in Classical Music Ph.D. in Music from Bangalore University.
Posts held	:	Hony Lecturer in Music with institutions for two decades.
		Guest Lecturer, Bangalore University for Post-graduate students in music since 1989
		Paper-setter & Examiner for Ph.D. & Post-graduate students in music for Tirupati, Andhra and Bangalore Universities.
		Chief Editor, Sri Tyagaraja Kriti Publications in Kannada (15 vols) - an encyclopaedic work
		Chief Editor, Gayana Gangotri - a monthly music magazine
		Director, Practical Programmes on Sivasharanas and Haridasas.

Born amidst musical environment with his father being a vocalist, flautist and violinist and his mother, a flautist, he has enriched his home with a singer as wife and a bharatanatya-music artiste in his daugher. Dr. Ramanakumar has been giving concerts in vocal music and violin - solo and as accompanist for over two decades simultaneously keeping himself fully engaged with academic work in teaching and examining senior students in music. Has presented numerous papers. Has released two cassettes on *Sri Purandara ganamrta* and other classical items

Composition	:	Melakarta Lakshana Kriti Mala, Varnas, Kritis, etc.

* * *

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R. RAMANI — VEENA ARTISTE & LECTURER:

(b. September 10, 1941)

Place of birth	:	Thanjavur
Parents	:	M. Rangan & Uthami Grandfather, Manavasi Ramaswamy Ayyar revelled in composing songs in sanskrit and tamil on deities, etc. His was a house of music.
Musical training under	:	Ramani Venkataraman of Ramani School of Music, Madras. Higher Grade Examination in music. Technical Teacher's Training Certificate *In Vocal music:* Ranganayaki Rajagopalan R. Vedavalli, the eminent musician-lecturer & T.N. Seshagopalan, the vainika-gayaka of repute
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts (Music), and Master of Arts.
Debut	:	Music Academy, Madras in Mid-year Series
Posts held	:	Lecturer, Teachers' College of Madras of the Music Academy (six years) Staff Artiste, All India Radio (for the last 11 years)
Concert tours	:	Hong-Kong, Paris & USA.

Ramani has been giving concerts at many centres and participating in cultural presentations and programes. While young, she had sung in films and later had won distinction and medals. She enjoys classical presentation and instrumental skill. 'She is remarkably expressive of ragas and seem to have a natural instinct for presenting them with poise, proportion and loveliness', stated N.M. Narayanan, the famous critic of yester decades. He has paid rich tributes to her craftsmanship and musicianship.

* * *

T.V. RAMPRASAD — VOCALIST:

(b. May 13, 1969)

Place of birth	:	Mumbai
Parents	:	Vyasa Rao and Rukmini, a musician
Qualification	:	Law Graduate & Cost Accountant
Musical training under	:	R.R. Keshavamurti T.V. Gopalakrishnan S. Rajam and Prof. D. Pasupati (formerly of Kalakshetra)
Debut	:	At Bangalore in 1980
Title	:	Gayana Gandharva by Delhi Kannadiga Sangha in 1986
Concert tour	:	United Kingdom

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Born in a musical family and opting for a musical career and presently ably supported by bharatanatyam danseuse Indira Kadambi, his wife, Ramprasad looks forward to a bright, productive future. He had undergone training under stalwart-teachers of much repute and varied styles. His rendition is traditional, vibrant, full-throated *(nabhi, hṛt, kantha, rasana)* with least indulgence in artificial, coaxed-voice. His handling of *raga-prastara, swara* delineation and kriti rendition is original with genuine and successful effort to bring out the best. Strict adherence to *kāla pramāna* and careful selection of concert content enhance the merit. He has taken interest in devotional music too. He has been giving concerts for All India Radio, Doordarshan, institutions, etc. Has released two albums. Ramprasad has founded the institution NADAM (Nadanta Academy for Dance and Music).

(It was continuously drizzling. His concert for Hamsadhwani, Madras was on an open lawn at 6.30 p.m. The *'Varshaya, varshaya, varshaya'* stopped by noon and the lawn learnt to dry up quickly. Concert over, drizzling commenced at 9.15 p.m. sharp. His prayers or good wishes of rasikas!)

* * *

V.V. RANGANATHAN — PERCUSSIONIST: (b. June 17, 1918)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Father	:	Viswanatha Sastri, a vainika & disciple of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar. Grandfather, Bharati Anniah, a Court Vidwan.
Training	:	Venkataramana Bhagavatar (vocal) Tiruvaiyaru Sankaranarayana Bhagavatar (mridangam) G.V. Srinivasa Rao, Special coaching in concert rendition, etc. Pandamangalam Krishnaswamy Ayyar in special techniques in tala and konnakol
Post held	:	Artiste, Akashvani, Mysore and then Bangalore when the station was shifted.
Title	:	Tala Vadya Durandhara Tala Vadya Kalanidhi at Hanumat Jayanti, Mysore Award from Sangita Nrtya Academy

Ranganathan imbibed much in the company of eminent musicians like Tiger Varadachariar, etc. and has provided percussion (mridangam, kanjira) or konnakol support to top musicians at various centres with brilliance and appreciation from audience and artistes.

* * *

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G.V. RANGANAYAKAMMA | DUO (b. Decr. 6, 1933)
G.V. NEELA | VOCALISTS (b. Decr. 11, 1939)

Born at Mysore in a musical family amidst robust environment which Mysore provided six decades back, Ranganayakamma and Neela have been giving musical concerts and teaching numerous disciples for the last five decades.

Parents	:	G. Vedanta Ayyangar & Lakshamma
Musical Training under	:	Sangita Kala Ratna M.S. Selvapulle Iyengar Sangita Kalandhi Rallapalle Anantakrishna Sarma Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan Passed Vidwath in Music too.
Debut	:	At Hassan in 1944

The duo vocalists have founded Sri Rama Lalita Kala Mandir and the Sri Devagiri Sangita Sabha at Bangalore. Have been giving concerts on All India Radio and sabhas. Ranganayakamma had been awarded a medal and the title of Gana Saraswati and she has published many articles. The music institutions are their inspired creations.

* * *

C. RANGIAH — COMPOSER-MUSICIAN: (1895-1984)

Nativity	:	Chilkunda village, Mysore district.
Training in music with	:	Shivaramiah, Chikka Subba Rao Vina Venkatagiriappa & Mysore Vasudevacharya
Post held	:	Drawing teacher, Marimallappa's High School, Mysore, in which Kallikote Shama Sastry, another musician, was also employed.

Rangiah's sons are musicians or at least trained in music and one of them C.R. Lakshminarayana, a Violinist is on the staff of All India Radio. Rangiah is known for his large number of compositions comprising *gitam, varnam, devaranama, tillana, kriti,* etc. His kritis in rare ragas like *Megharanjani, Chandrarekha, Nigamagamini,* etc. with notation have been published. He has composed songs in each of the 72 *melakarta ragas* like a few other maestros. It is said that his *Saveri* piece *Saptataleswari* can be sung in all the seven talas and all the *gatis.* His disciples have published his songs in five books available with his disciple, C.R. Vasudeva, Mysore. It is said that he approached the State Government for help to publish his compositions. The officials declined and the work was left to be done by his worthy disciples.

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M.S. SADASIVAM — VOCALIST:

Parentage	:	Vidwan Madurai S. Subramania Ayyar
Training in music under	:	Father, a distinguished violinist.
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts
Post held	:	Assistant Station Director, All India Radio, Madras (Rtd.)
Other Posts held	:	Member, Board of Studies (Indian Music), Madras University 1979-1981
		Examiner, Government College of Carnatic Music 1979-1981
		Examiner, Delhi University (M.A. & M.Phil.) and Madras University 1981 & 1983 1987 & 1995
		Teaching Vocal Students in B.A. course 1987-88
Title	:	Sangita Ratnakara by Sri Tyaga Brhmam Mahabhisheka Kainkarya Trust, Tiruvaiyaru in 1995
Concert tour	:	USA

Sadasivam has been giving concerts over All India Radio and at Sabhas. Has been a devoted musical enthusiast to propagate Classical Carnatic music with his rich background as son and disciple of Subramania Ayyar, Professor in Violin with Madras and Annamalai Universities, who had presented several stalwarts to adorn the musical sphere with distinction. Sadasivam claims to be a descendant of the family of Sri Tyagaraja

* * *

MARUDHANALLUR SRI SADGURU SWAMIGAL — BHAGAVATA MAHAPURUSHA: (1777 - 1817)

Father Venkatasubramania Ayyar (called Sesha Sastrigal) of Tiruvisainallur, a priest, had to leave the village for a while and entrusted his young son, Venkatarama Desikan with the task of officiating as priest for a *śrāddha* (ceremony). Venkatarama lost himself in prayers at a temple till it was evening. When the priest with his repentent son went to the house of the client, he was amazed and astounded when told that the *śrāddha* was duly performed with the same boy officiating! The worthy father found the significance of Tiruvalluvar's couplet then:

'Mahan tandaikkārrum udavi
Ivan tandai ennorrān kol.'

(The duty of a son to his father is to draw the appreciation 'what penance the father should have undergone to beget such a son'.)

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That gave the indication of Venkatarama's future and the mission he had to assume charge of. He led the life of a normal, well-ordained house-holder *(grihasta)* full of prayers and *bhajans.* He would seem to have had extensive pilgrimage. Born dumb, he was cured of the handicap with blessings of Sri Bodhendra. Well-versed in scriptural lore, he was well respected by disciples and public. He moved to Marudhanallur (9 kilometres from Kumbakonam) and lived on *uncchavrtti* (daily collection of alms). (This is not beggary. It is exalted conduct of an eminent soul with a spiritual will not to taint his hand and life with wealth but devote, dedicate and surrender his life to Almighty and for bare existence collect from willing, pious, well-meaning house-holders some rice just enough to satisfy the minimum qualms of the belly. These souls were respected; they stopped not but went round with an *akshaya-pātra* (small vessel) singing and chanting unruffled by mundane activities. Women met them on the street, prostrated, emptied the small quantity of rice brought and returned with token grains placed by the devout man as blessing. A *quid pro quo,* in essence. The hand that gave the handful rice shall suffer no wants and the few grains laid in the woman's vessel were treated and faithfully assumed to be an insurance against wants.

Here the man on the street is respected as a divine, parading through the well-cleansed frontage on the street, soaked in divine endeavours and respected for his life, conduct and devotion for the salvation of humanity - a divinity pacing the streets to confer benediction at doorsteps! Because she is rich, the lady does not hand over a bagful of rice. 'It was so much and nothing more.' What a gloried spiritual exercise and atmosphere they were. How much contentment it generated and how enlightened and elegant spiritual, linguistic, musical, etc. activity was carried on then. Art and culture flourished in a measure not witnessed elsewhere at any time. The frugal life, the sheer absence of any considerations of wealth weighed against the devout's laudable output drew out the respect and regard of the populace. People stood up as the man passed along the street and prostrated before him. What a nation it was! Poverty when linked to spiritual or artistic affluence was adored and respected. No other nation could boast of such an immense wealth of human ethos! All is lost and never will even be understood! Let it not be thought that it was confined to upper castes alone. It was all-pervasive comprising devotees of ālwars, nāyanmārs, of Ramalinga Swamigal and other saints and seers.

Venkatarama at Marudhanallur became the centre of *nāma saṅkirtana, nāma siddhānta* with many disciples, followers and admirers and soon blossomed into Sadguru Swāmigal, prime architect of full-fledged *bhajans* (congregational devotional singing with stringed and percussive instruments). Sadguru Swamigal

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streamlined the procedures, mode of rendition drawing inspiration from all sources including the Tallapaka Annamacharya songs. *Bhajana sampradaya* shaped by him drew extensive following and this swelled up into a massive mass-appeal activity and villages and towns throbbed with bhajans on *Ēkādaśi, Krittikā, Rāma Navami, Gōkulāṣṭami* and other days. Bhajan maestri were many and were widely respected. If the Trinity and their disciples later elevated the images of composers and musicians, Swamigal and the other *mahā purushas* popularised *bhajans* and raised the dignity of the participating singers. The *Nāma Siddhānta* Movement was in full swing gathering momentum from the lives and contribution of many like:

Bhadrachala Ramadasa	(1522-1580)
Sadasiva Brhmendral	(1560-1782)*
Bodhendra Swamigal	(1610-1692)
Sridhara Venkatesa Arya	(1630-1730)
Swami Narayana Tirtha	(1675-1745)
Uthukadu Venkatasubbayyar	(1700-1765)

*Exact period not yet identified.)

Sadguru Swamigal took passionate efforts to identify the samadhi of Bodhendra Swamigal run over by river Virasolan due to river erosion. He got the help of Raja Serfoji II of Tanjore to divert the river course near the samadhi and construct the samadhi itself. Regular services were initiated and it has recently been renovated. Silver idols presented by the ruler were installed at the math at Marudhanallur. His math is still there.

Sadguru Swamigal authored the treatise *Bhakti Sandēha Dhvānta Bhāskaraḥ* (The sun that dispels the darkness of doubts in matters of devotion) in the form of questions and answers and a digest of authorities, etc. Says Swamigal:

> 'Even liberated souls such as Narada who sings, "I wander about playing on the vina adorned by *swarabrhman* and given to me by the devas singing the story of Hari" unremittingly perform *nāmakīrtanam...*'

> 'The practice *(uñchavṛtti)* of saintly people is to be considered as good as sanctioned by *śastras.*'

The benediction ends thus:

> 'Auspiciousness be to the Preceptor Bodhendra, the refuge of all the world, the *alter ego* of Sridhara Arya, the uplifter of the tradition of *nāma (kīrtanam).*'

The bhajan movement had intensive following in the nooks and corners of Bharath but there is positive decline *(avarohana)* in the extent and quality of

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bhajans during the last two or three decades reaching its nadir in recent years. It is cultural and spiritual *harakiri* since *bhajan* is the one single cultural, art-based spiritual endeavour available to the masses and congregations.

Now let us hail	:	Bodhendra Swamiki Jai Sadguru Swamiki Jai So goes on the final chantings in chorus.

* * *

SAROJA SUNDARAM — DEVOTIONAL MUSIC SINGER:

(b. April 24, 1957)

Wife of a top IAS officer, Saroja Sundaram has dedicated her life to the propagation of devotional music comprising *Tevaram, Tirumandiram,* etc. She formed a group of ladies with interest in music and *Tevaram* at Tuticorin and, on the transfer of her husband to Madras, a fresh one at Madras. These two groups have given about 54 + 420 recitals at different centres evoking popular appeal, involvement and acclamation. Her group trains students also at Tirugnanasambandar Tevara Innisai Payirchi Kazhagam.

Titles	:	Tirumurai Innisai Tilakam by Kripananda Variar Tirumurai Isai Mani by Bagam Piriyal Mathar Sangham. Tirumurai Isai Peroli by Tamil Nadu Nalvazhi Nilayam. Kalaimamani by Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram
Place of birth	:	Rajapalayam
Names of parents	:	R.V. Ramasundaram Pillai & Sivakami Ammal
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts.
Musical training under	:	Vasanta Saravanan, in veena Saidai T. Natarajan in *Tevaram*
Debut	:	Kapaleeswarar Temple, Madras on April 4, 1989

It is a matter for praise and gratification that Saroja Sundaram and her team carry on a laudable movement to spread devotional music and spiritual ethos when interest in devotional music is in the *avarohana* among the public.

* * *

T.S. SATYAVATHI — VOCALIST/MUSICOLOGIST:

(b. September 26, 1956)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Parents	:	T.S. Srinivasamurthy & Rangalakshmi

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Family background	:	Mother well-versed in music; brother and two elder sisters are musically trained and involved, the sisters being musicians of repute.
Academic Qualification	:	M.A., M.Phil. (Sanskrit)
Training in music under	:	Vasantha Madhavi, Vocalist-sister Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan Sangita Kalaratna B.V.K. Sastri in musicology. Sangita Kalaratna Bangalore K. Venkataram in mridangam.
Debut	:	At the age of 16 for Karnataka Ganakala Parishat, Bangalore
Post now held	:	Head of Department of Sanskrit, VVS First Grade College for Women, Bangalore'.

With profound music at home and two elder sisters in active involvement in and pursuit of music, natural development in childhood could be only musical. Music is inculcated and imbibed unnoticed in keeping with the proverb, 'One need not teach the child of a fisherman to swim'. If one could quote the pregnant words of Patnam Subramania Ayyar, the child is taken through all the corridors of the temple of music and what is left is only to take it into its sanctum. Even so, the child sang before the Maharani of Mysore at the age of two and at eleven proved her merit as *ēka santagrāhi.* Sanskrit and music have been inseparable twins in the lives of many maestri and that holds good in the case of Satyavati too. Her special training in mridangam and musicology has equipped her with the essentials in *laya* and *lakshana* to explore and canalise her immense vocal potential and expertise on aesthetic, well-planned channels. She had amassed a number of awards and honours for her impressive rendition and lecture-demonstrations. Her pedagogic talents help to give vital shape and polish to her rendition and lecture-demonstrations. She has been giving concerts, etc. at most of the centres in India and abroad.

Has translated the music section of *Mānasollāsa* into kannada for the Karnatak University. Her adaptation of sanskrit plays and setting tunes for *Gita Govinda* and *Sakuntala* for dance ballet has been lauded. Enjoys a pleasant voice and facile presentation. She enjoys all the requisite potential to attain the best in the field of music.

Title : Gana Kala Shree from Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat (1995).

* * *

M.S. SELVAPULLE IYENGAR OF MYSORE — VOCALIST:

(May 18, 1915 - April 26, 1993)

Place of birth : Melkote (Mysore)

Father : Sampatkumarachar, a musician

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Musical training : Preliminary with father
Ramaswami Ayyangar, son of Pallavi Narasimha Ayyangar
Bidaram Krishnappa, veteran vocalist

After elaborate training under the distinguished gurus, Selvapulle Iyengar continued his studies at the College of Music, Annamalai University then under the distinguished Teaching Trinity - Principal Sabhesa Ayyar, Tanjore Ponniah Pillai and Madurai Subramania Ayyar. It was a period of subtle excellence in music and the University was at its peak of teaching expertise. If Sabhesa Ayyar brought the style and graces of the immortal Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Ponniah Pillai brought in the excellence and nuances of Muthuswami Dikshitar tradition. No wonder Selvapulle drank deep the affluence of musical traditions, *paramparya* renditional graces and insight into the inexhaustible panorama of *lakshana-lakshya* music. The atmosphere then at the University was quasi-gurukula and it attracted the galaxy as teachers and trainees. Most of them flowered into prominent and popular vidwans. And Iyengar was no exception. He got his diploma, Sangita Bhushanam in 1934. He was a specialist in theory and his rendition excelled in *raga bhava,* clarity of *sahitya* pronunciation and sweet presentation. No wonder, he chose the popular top musician Madurai Seshagopalan as his son-in-law.

From 1942 to 1975, he was Prathama Vidwan with the Akashvani, Mysore (later merged in All India Radio). He started the group presentation, Brinda-Gana, which won popular acclamation. He did not enter the professional race but pursued his motto to educate and enlighten. The Akashvani gave him the opportunity to pursue his ambition. He took special delight in propagating the *melakarta ragas* on the lines laid down by Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar.

Honours & Titles:

Karnataka Kala Tilaka by Karnataka Sangita Nrtya Academy
Sangita Kalanidhi by Gayana Samaja Sammelan in 1984.

* * *

B.R. SESHADRI — MRIDANGIST: (b. March 23, 1928)

Father : B.S. Raja Iyengar, a very popular vocalist with a golden voice.

Academic Qualification : B.Sc.

Percussive training under : Palghat Ayyamani Ayyar
Tabla Narasimhayya
Palghat Kunjumani Ayyar

Debut : 1939 accompanied his father in his concert

Service : Served in Hindustan Aeronautics during 1951 - 1986

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Compositions : About a hundred *Devaranamas* and *Thodayams, varnam, Tillanas,* etc for dances.

Titles : Mridanga Bhisma by Shantala Arts Academy
Karnataka Kala Tilaka by State Dance & Music Academy.

Seshadri has provided accompaniment to many vidwans. In 1951, he began playing for dancers and has accompanied an impressive list of dancers like Indrani Rehman and has covered many countries. Has acted in many dramas and two films.

* * *

SHAILA SUBRAMANYAM — VOCALIST (b. February. 3, 1934)

Place of birth : Palghat - Chittur

Parents : Subramanya Ayyar who had training under Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar and A.R. Jayanti who had training under Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar while sister Meena Krishnan was an artiste with All India Radio.

Training in music under : Ayyalur Krishnan and Parvathi Mahadevan

Shaila has grown amidst musicians in the garden of melody where there was plenty of music, her parents having undergone training under stalwart Sangita Kalanidhis. She had taken inspiration from Sangita Kalanidhis D.K. Jayaraman and R.K. Srikantan also. Has been giving concerts on All India Radio, Doordarshan and sabhas, besides giving lecture-demonstrations.

* * *

M.R. SHANKARAMURTI — MUSICIAN: (1922-1993)

Shankaramurthi hailed from Maddalapura, Hassan district and had training in music under Ramabhatta, Mayavaram Rama Jois and Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar. He rounded off his studies under R.R. Keshavamurthy. He has authored about forty books on music in kannada. He has brought out kritis with notation and meaning in the Karnataka Sangita Tarangini Grantamala Series.

* * *

TIRUMALAI SISTERS — DUO VOCALISTS:

T. SHARADA (b. September 18, 1938)
Dr. T. SACHIDEVI (b. October 26, 1940)

	T. Sharada:	**Dr. T. Sachidevi**
Place of birth :	Malavalli in Mandya district	Bangalore
Parents :	T.R. Tatachar and Lokajanani, a disciple of Titte Narayana Ayyangar	

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Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts & Proficiency Certificates in Vocal & Veena	M.A. (Music) Ph.D.
Posts held	:	Professor of Music, Maharani's College for Women, Bangalore	Professor of Music, Maharani's College for Women, Bangalore.
		Chairman, Board of Examiners in Music, Bangalore University	
		Member, Board of Studies in Music, Mysore & Karnataka Universities	Chairman, Text Book Committee & Special Music Examination Government of Karnataka
Debut as Duo	:	At Seshadripuram in 1952 for Sankara Jayanti	
Publications (Jointly)	:	*Karnataka Sangita Darpana* (4 Parts) *Sobana Sataka* - 33 *Purandara Dāsa Kirtans* in notation *Apūrva varnas.*	

Sharada has had her training in music under—

Belakavadi Varadaraja Iyengar, C.P. Rangaswami Iyengar, a disciple of Kanchipuram Naina Pillai, Chittoor Subramania Pillai, M.S. Selvapulle Iyengar and Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sharma, Learnt veena under Shankaranarayana Shastry.	They taught Dr. Sachi devi too.

Dr. Sachidevi got her B.A.(Music) in Mysore University.
M.A.(Music) at S.V. University, Tirupati and
Ph.D. from Bangalore University.

T. Sharada has been honoured by Sri Tyagaraja Gana Sabha, Bangalore with the title of Ganakala Bhushani. The duo sisters have been giving concerts, demonstration-lectures and contributing articles. They provide training to students also. Specialisation in theory *(lakshana)* of music and teaching help their frequent participation at seminars and lecture-demonstrations and rich contribution in a field which has just a handful of women-theoreticians.

* * *

D. SHASHIKALA — VOCALIST: (b. October 20, 1951)

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Names of parents	:	D. Venkata Rama Rao & B.R. Rukminiamma
General Qualification	:	S.S.L.C.
Musical training under	:	Pallavi Vidwan R. Chandra Singh, said to be a disciple of Swaminatha Pillai (16 years)
		M. Vinjamuri Rajagopala Iyengar, disciple of Tiger Varadachariar (8 years)

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Proficiency by passing the Vidwat Examination.

Debut : On May 7, 1965 at a marriage reception, followed by a concert at Ulsoorpet Rama Mandiram, Bangalore in 1966.

Post held : Music Teacher, Corporation Girls' High School since 1971

Honours & Titles :

Laya Gana Pravine from Rama Seva Mandali, Bangalore	1971
Gana Kokile from Raghavendra Krpa Kala Sangha, Bangalore	1978
Best Teacher Award from Nivarana, Bangalore	1993

Great grandfather Gopala Rao was a vainika. Shashikala has been an ardent votary of pallavi rendition and has been giving concerts for All India Radio since 1973 and elsewhere. She has received appreciation and medals. Gives lecture-demonstrations too.

* * *

VINA SHIVARAMIAH — PALACE VIDWAN : (1888 - 1950)

Born in a musical family, Vina Shivaramiah had his training under his father Padmanabhiah, voca-vainika and disciple of the illustrious Vina Shamanna. Padmanabhiah had served in the Maharajah's Sanskrit College, Mysore and the Maharani's Girls School besides being a Palace Vidwan. B.V.K. Sastri states that he was the first guru to the distinguished Mysore Vasudevacharya. For five decades, he had served in Palace Service and he was a *sampradaya* vidwan. He formulated the **new *raga, Swayambhuswara* comprising only three *swaras - Shadja, Antara Gandhara* and *Panchama:*** and composed a ***kirtana,*** a hindustani Cheez, an English Band tune and a ***mangalam*** in the raga. It is really a monumental pioneering exercise and a historic achievement, if its melodious aspect is satisfactory. He composed a varnam in raga ***Lalitasimharava*** and dedicated it to Krishnaraja Wodeyar, Maharaja of Mysore.

* * *

SITALAKSHMI VENKATESAN — VOCALIST: (b. June 12, 1926)

Father : Sahasranama Ayyar, Trivandrum College.

Music training under : Palghat Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Thanjavur Sankara Ayyar, eminent composer-musician. Rama Rao Nayak in Hindustani music

Debut : In her tenth year

Titles : Gana Saraswati from Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams
Gana Kala Prapurna from Hamsadhwani Sabha

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K.S. Narayanaswami Ayyar and Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar had guided her progress during their stay at Trivandrum in connection with compilation and codification of the songs of Swati Tirunal Maharajah. Sitalakshmi Venkatesan is blest with good voice and has been giving concerts at various centres, sabhas, etc. She founded along with others Sadguru Sangita Samiti.

* * *

BELAKAVADI SRINIVASA AYYANGAR — VOCALIST:

(b. March 20, 1910)

It is a family with a musical heritage. Father Srinivasa Ayyangar was a musician and guru to his first son, whom he named after himself. Young Srinivasan and his brothers, Varadaraja and Rangaswami, all flowered into musicians. Music was the staple to the family. Srinivasa Ayyangar got a diploma from the reputed Madras College of Carnatic Music. Sangita Kalanidhi G.N. Balasubramaniam, who was also born in the same year (1910), was reportedly learning music with Srinivasa Ayyangar. Since Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar and Srinivasa Ayyangar (Sr.) were good friends, it helped Srinivasa (Jr.) to imbibe knowledge and inspiration from that maestro. Later Srinivasa Ayyangar (Jr.) was mostly in Bangalore and Mysore.

Posts held	:	Teacher in Music, Vani Vilasa High School, Bangalore Tutor in Music in the Training College when his father died. Member Rajya Sangita Samiti. Secretary, Sangita Kalabhivardhini, Mysore.
Publications	:	Ganamrta (with his father) - for learners. Compositions of Mysore Sadasiva Rao and Vina Shamanna
Titles & Honours	:	Ganakala Bhushana by Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat Karnataka Kala Tilaka by Rajya Sangita Nrtya Academy

Srinivasa Ayyangar, born in the rich Mandya district, was giving concerts, lecture-demonstrations and presenting features on Muthiah Bhagavatar, etc. He had many disciples including his brother, Rangaswami Ayyangar. He was Asthana Vidwan too.

* * *

SRINIVASA UDUPA — MUSICIAN/PEDAGOGUE:

(b. November 22, 1923)

Father Krishna had his musical apprenticeship under the celebrated musician-composer, Poochi Srinivasa Ayyangar before settling down at Mangalore. He was a teacher in Besant Girls' School and Srinivasa Udupa had

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his training in music under his father. Son succeeded his father as teacher on the latter's death. Srinivasa Udupa had further coaching under Professor Sambamurti, etc and got his diploma. He learnt Hindustani music also from Chidananda Nagarkar. He was adviser or member of many institutions including the State Government Board of Examiners.

He brought out *gēya nātakas* (operas) which were broadcast by All India Radio and was closely connected with Bangalore Gayana Samaja sammelans, etc.

Publications : Natya Ramayana
Text Books on Music for Standards IV to VIII
Pocket Dictionary on Sangita
Contributed the Music Chapter to the Karnataka Viswakosa (Encyclopaedia)

* * *

NAGPUR B. SUBBA RAO — INSTRUMENTALIST: (b. 1894)

Nativity : Basavapatna, Hassan district

Learnt music with : Viswanatha Sastry of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar disciple-line.

Posts held : Deputy Director of Agriculture, Madhya Pradesh.

Member, Board of Studies in Music, Nagpur University
Member, Central Advisory Board, All India Radio
Member, Experts' Advisory Committee, Music Academy, Madras.

A good player on vina, violin, gottuvadyam, Subba Rao was good in Hindustani music also. Has composed songs in hindi and sanskrit under the *mudra* Nagapurisa Subrahmanya. He has left behind many unpublished articles, etc. He authored *Raga Nidhi* (four volumes) dealing extensively on ragas - Carnatic and Hindustani; this was published by Music Academy Madras.

* * *

T.H. SUBASHCHANDRAN - PROMINENT PERCUSSIONIST: (b. April 25, 1946)

Father and Guru : T.H. Harihara Sarma

Training in percussion under : Father
K.M. Vaidyanathan, ghatam artiste
Palghat Ramachandra Ayyar, mridangam artiste.

Posts held : Vice Principal, Sri Jaya Ganesa Tala Vadya Vidyalaya (since 1959) founded by his father and headed by his brother, T.H. Vinayakram after his father's demise.

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		Taught percussion at the California Institute of Arts as Visiting Professor - October 1976 - December 1977.
		Visiting Summer Music Teacher during summers of 1989 to 1992 at Sri Venkateswara Temple, Pittsburg, USA.
Special concerts	:	Had played with world famous Zubin Mehta, New York Philharmonic Orchestra and USSR Philharmonic Orchestra.
		Had accompanied the eminent Yehudi Menuhin and L. Subramaniam in USA, Ustad Bismillah Khan, the shenoy titan and many others.
Concert tours	:	USA, UK, Europe, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, Canada, Sri Lanka, Hongkong, Singapore, etc with leading artistes.

Subashchandran is an accomplished percussionist whose fingers speak with their devilrous play and foreign countries beckon him more often to his immense joy. Percussion is in his blood and in his family. His dexterous, breezy play is effortless and brings out his rich expertise born out of innate ability and association with artistes of top cadres and styles.

* * *

D. SUBBARAMAYYA — VOCALIST: (1903 - August 16, 1986)

Place of birth	:	Pathaganahalli, Koratagere taluk, Tumkur district
Father	:	Dasappa, a violinist
Training in music	:	Initially his father Then his uncle
Debut	:	1915-16

Honours & Titles :

Ganakala Sindhu by Music Conference at the Prasanna Sitarama Mandira, Mysore	1960
Honours from Karnataka Sangeeta Nritya Academy	1963
Gana Kala Kusala by the Udipi Mutt	
Nadasudha Nidhi by Nadasudha Sangita Sabha	

Subbaramayya shot into fame when he gave gramaphone disc recordings of twenty songs which became the rage of the day. Well versed in *lakshana* and *lakshya sangeet,* he was a scholar in sanskrit, kannada and english. He was a sincere guru and was examiner for over four decades. Taught sanskrit at the Chamarajapet Pathasala and founded in 1931 the Karnataka Music College which was the first music college to be recognised and aided by the Government of Karnataka.

In memory of the prominent vocalist, his disciple Vasanthamadhavi has promoted D. Subbaramayya Fine Arts Trust in 1993.

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SATTUR A.G. SUBRAMANIAM - DEVOTED VOCALIST: (1916-1977)

Place of birth	:	Aangarai, Tiruchirapalli district
Parents	:	Ganesa Sastrigal and Thailammal
Musical training	:	Annamalai University, where he obtained his Sangita Bhushanam diploma in 1936
Debut	:	At Sadguru Tyagaraja Festival, Tiruvaiyaru in 1937.

Even as Papanasam Sivan born at Polagam was popularly called after Papanasam just because he lived there for sometime, Patnam Subramania Ayyar was associated with Madras (Patnam) and Karaikudi Veena Brothers came to be called after that prosperous Chettinad town and not after Pudukottai wherefrom they hailed, Subramaniam came to be identified with the commercial town of Sattur for the same reason. But in his case, there is a marked illogicality in this appellation since the eminent vocalist was a symbol and picture of humility, amiability and cordiality while Sattur is famous for its hot chillis! If Subramaniam was lacking in any emotion, it was his incapability to get hot and angry, averred Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. T.K. Murthy.

A.G. Subramaniam had the good fortune of having distinguished maestri at the University like Tiruvaiyaru Sabhesa Ayyar and Thanjavur Ponniah Pillai as his preceptors. He was well conversant with sanskrit, telugu, hindi and tamil and his rendition was rich and soaked in *bhāva-rasa.* A purist to the last, his raga *alapanas* and *pallavi* elaboration in different ragas were masterpieces of expertise, *lakshana-lakshya* elegance, high level artistic exhuberance of *manodharma* which endeared him to the top artistes of his days like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar, Madurai Mani Ayyar and G.N. Balasubramaniam. He was given the privilege of inaugural concert at Sri Rama Navami Celebrations at Coimbatore consistently. Likewise, K.S. Mahadevan said, the inaugural concert at Sri Shanmukhananda Sangita Sabha at Bombay was assigned to Subramaniam with young M. Chandrasekharan and T.K. Murthy as accompanists. Subramaniam was a sought-after musician.

Fortunately two gramaphone records and three cassettes of his rendition have been retrieved and a beginning to popularise the same was made with the release of a cassette on August 15, 1995.

Subramaniam was a dedicated guru adored by his disciples like Sirkali V.R. Subramaniam, Sirkali R. Jayaraman, Musiri Rangarajan, Tiruchi N. Natarajan, Sulochana Pattabhiraman, Sitamani Srinivasan and a host of others including his musical daughters. (It was one of his disciples, Bala Adinarayanan who gave the initial training in music to my daughter in 1969 at Ramnad.) His disciples

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celebrated his Eightieth Jayanti on the Independence Day, 1995 with rare devotion and dedication.

Remuneration of artistes in many cases is known to leave a pungent, biting taste among sidemen. In some cases the vocalist takes a moiety or more as Bhima among Pandavas was accustomed to at the dining table. Violinist, principal and secondary percussionists would take the balance in reducing proportions which in several cases was too poor a compensation to be called remuneration. A.G. Subramaniam was too sensitive and human a musician in matters of money. He believed in the simple arithmetic of dividing the full remuneration by the number of participating artistes, each taking his share! A very rare practice indeed which may not be palatable to those who follow the example of the monkey arbitrating between two belligernt cats over a piece of bread. Dr. T.K. Murthy mentioned an incident. Near Vilangudi (Tanjore - Tiruvaiyaru belt), after the concert, the host presented the amount of remuneration with due decorum. When Subramaniam counted it later to share it with others, lo! there was excess. He became nervous and handed it over to T.K. Murthy. He counted it and found it to be the double of the stipulated sum. Subramaniam pleaded with Murthy to take it to the notice of the host, who, when approached, confirmed that he was so pleased with the concert that he was glad to increase the amount. Violinist Rajamanickam Pillai and T.K. Murthy insisted that the extra amount could not be brought to the divisible pool but that it belonged only to the principal, Subramaniam. It was difficult to make him agree, said T.K. Murthy. That was the nobility of his musical career. Money had no place in his dealings. A gentleman-performer, he was.

Tamil Nadu Sangita Nataka Academy conferred the title of Kalaimamani on him in 1966. He died before he could come up for the title of Sangita Kalanidhi. And titles were also rare those days and hard to earn!

Subramaniam had an enjoyable voice and his music was orthodox with *laya* and *sruti suddham.* A devoted guru, a gentleman and a good musician, he was lovable. He came of a religious family and was capable of nothing but heed to the Divine Call:

'Fix your mind on Me;
Be devoted to Me;
Bow down to me;
Having thus united your (whole) Self with Me,
You shall come to Me.'

— *(Bhagawad Gita* IX.34)

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PALANI SUBRAMANYA BHAGAVATAR — COMPOSER: (1851-1933)

Son of Palani Dandapani Swamigal, Subramanya Bhagavatar was a noted exponent of harikatha. Born at Palani, he spent his life at Srirangam. He has composed many songs in telugu and tamil in praise of Lord Muruga mostly, having His original moorings at Palani, one of the prime Abodes of the Lord He has adopted the signature of 'Sivagiri'. Kalpagam Subramanyam; his disciple, rendered some of the songs at the 45th Conference of the Madras Music Academy in 1971-72. The Academy had brought out the first publication of one tillana and eight songs with notation. They are in popular ragas like *Todi, Sankarabharanam, Mohanam,* etc.

* * *

KOLLEGAL SUBRAHMANYAM — VOCALIST-COMPOSER: (b. 1929)

Father and guru	:	R. Balakrishna Ayyar
Later training in music with	:	Belakavadi Varadaraja Iyengar Muthiah Bhagavatar

Subramanyam has composed about 450 songs in tamil, telugu, sanskrit, kannada and hindi and has authored the dance-dramas *Mohini Bhasmasura, Jatayu Mokṣam* and *Adi Parasakti.* A great devotee of Tyagaraja, he has achieved much in propagating the bard's songs at Hyderabad and has published about 200 songs of Tyagaraja with notation.

He has given two cassettes including many of his own compositions. Has invented ragas.

* * *

L. SUBRAMANIAM - VIOLINIST/COMPOSER:

L. Subramaniam is a renowned violinist and a composer in East- West orchestral fusion. Born in an enviable environment of music as son of Prof. L. Lakshminarayanan (1911-1990) and Seethalakshmi, he had his training in theoretical and practical music with his father, whom L. Subramaniam describes as 'a torch-bearer in introducing fabulous, masterful, original, new techniques in playing the violin and as one who introduced innovative concepts in the art'.

Subramaniam received his Master's degree in Western Classical music from the California Institute of Arts. The intense passion he has for Western music

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and the training in Indian music he had received earlier have helped him to draw on and establish his versatility, in both the systems and present "a blend of the melodic and rhythmic richness of his native idiom with the contrapuntal and harmonic progressions of the European classical music". In his multi-sided endeavours, he received the whole-hearted participation of his musical wife, Vijayasree. He is a stalwart soloist too. Full-bowing, tonal modulations, brevity in presenting *sangatis* are among the virtues of his play.

1985 :	He wrote the symphonic work 'Fantasy on Vedic Chants' which he premiered with the New York Philharmonic and later elsewhere.
1987 :	He premiered the 'Turbulence' with the Swiss Romande Orchestra in Geneva
	He premiered the 'Shanti Priya', 'Spring Rhapsody', 'Nada Priya' and many others.
Publication :	*Euphony - Indian Classical Music* (with his late wife as co-author) which is a general review of the Indian system.
Honours :	Sangit Natak Akademi Award in 1990.

* * *

M.S. SUBRAMANIAM - VIOLINIST: (b. April 12, 1920)

Father	:	Tabla Subba Ayyar. It is a family with a musical *parampara*.
Musical training under	:	Fiddle Subbarayar Asthana Vidwan Venkatarama Ayyar in both vocal and violin
		Devendrappah Narayanaswami Bhagavatar in the special nuances and techniques of rendition.
		Seshagiri Rayar
Post held	:	Staff Artiste, Akashvani, Mysore and Bangalore when Akashvani itself was shifted to that city.
Titles & Honours	:	Fiddle Vadya Pravina conferred at Mysore by Hanumat Jayanti Utsav Committee
		Sunada Pravina by Chintamani Sangita Sabha
		Kala Sindhu by Rajaji Nagar Sangita Sabha
		Honoured by Gana Kala Parishat

Subramaniam has been providing able accompaniment to prominent musicians and has been the constant accompanist to Titte Krishna Ayyangar, Seshappa and Channamma. Violinist M.S. Govindaswami is his son.

* * *

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M.V. SUBRAMANYA SURI — VIOLINIST: (b. August 2, 1957)

Parents	:	K.L.N. Murthy M. Kamala Devi
Academic Qualification	:	M.A., M.Ed., Diploma in Music (Violin)
Training in music under	:	Challa Dattatreya Sarma Sagi Venkateswara Rao Kotipally Suryaprakasa Rao Dr. Sripada Pinakini, a Sangita Kalanidhi (1962-1974)
Debut	:	November 1974 at Guntur
Post held	:	Staff Artiste, All India Radio, Hyderabad since September 7, 1990

Subramanya Suri has been providing accompaniment to prominent artistes like his own guru, Dr. Pinakini.

* * *

N.V. SUBRAMANIAN - VIOLINIST/PATRON (b. October 26, 1933)

'Saraswati' and 'Saraswati Vaggeyakara Trust' are familiar but significant names in musical circles. They present about four programs every month not in the routine, beaten track but with a goal to aim at and an objective to cherish and achieve. More often, their programs have specific orientation in musical structures, raga patterns, *vāggēyakāra*-wise individuality and specialisation, etc. which help to bring out the hidden soul of Classical Carnatic music in its varied aspects. Just as soul is also *ātman, bṛhman, bṛhmānanda,* infinite, *Hiraṇyagarbha,* etc., viewed from specific angles, what goes in the name of music has its varied inclusive and exclusive aspects. The two institutions named above while providing the normal musical menu take special care to emphasise and highlight such individual aspects at most of their programs. While providing entertainment, they seek to provide musical insight and enlightenment and elevation of noble human urges, emotions and thoughts in the field of art.

Saraswati was formed in 1979 and the Saraswati Vaggeyakara Trust was born in 1987 primarily to propagate the compositions of important composers as its name signifies. Trinity apart, it has brought to focus the compositions of many stalwarts. In 1992, in the brochure on Music Academy, Madras, I emphasised the need for shifting some programs to important muffasal centres if Classical Carnatic music were to survive. The Trust is seen to be doing the very same thing arranging theme-oriented concerts at rural towns, which is very laudable indeed. It identifies itself with like-minded efforts of other institutions to

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further the cause of music more effectively. This is another praiseworthy feature. Thus the twin institutions serve music with a plan to back up and a goal to aim at. Someone asked Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Nehruji, what is the secret of your success?'. 'Well', he replied, 'I pitch my goal so high that I find I am eternally trying to achieve it! That's the secret!' The same could apply to such institutions and their promoters. They decline to be classified as 'also-ran' institutions!

The brain behind the founding and functioning of the twins is N.V. Subramanian, a violinist who has provided accompaniment to many stalwarts and whose robust *ātman* floats perpetually in the Ocean of *Nada.* During 1951-53 he had formal training in vocal and violin from Pichumani Ayyar and later built up his expertise by keen observation. And he says that he plays as accompanist only for *ātma trpti.* He is connected with many other institutions too. He arranges for lecture- demonstrations on specific topics for the benefit of the lay and the professionals. His Trust has arranged for special classes at Tambaram to teach special compositions of the Trinity to **teachers** through Tiruvengadu Jayaraman, a senior vidwan of repute and has built up about 1500 hours of listening in a cassette library.

Academic Qualification	:	M.A., B.L.
Post held	:	Chief Commercial Superintendent, Chief Operating Superintendent, Additional General Manager (Rtd.), Southern Railway 1991 Member, Railway Rates Tribunal 1991-94.
Associated with others Organisations like	:	Managing Trustee, Gnanaskandan Trust Chair-person, Parampara Trustee, Tiruppunturutti Sri Narayana Tirtha Trust, Member, Programme Advisory Committee, All India Radio.

* * *

Dr. SUMA SUDHINDRA - VEENA VIDUSHI (b. August 1, 1952)

Place of birth	:	Mysore
Parents	:	N.S. Rao & Saraswati
General Qualification	:	M.A., Ph.D. (Music) from Bangalore University
Musical Training under	:	L. Raja Rao Dr. Chittibabu, the late lamented veena maestro. Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan M.A. Narasimhachar
Debut	:	July, 1976
Publication, etc.	:	Dr. Suma Sudhindra has given many lecture- demonstrations and published papers in magazines, etc.
Concert tours	:	Four trips to USA; Four trips to England; Two trips to Malaysia & Singapore.

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Disc recordings	:	Has given many.
Posts held	:	Running the institution, Tarangini to teach vina. Guest Lecturer, Bangalore University Hony. Secretary, Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore.

Dr. Suma Sudhindra has been giving concerts at various institutions and centres. She enjoys a high standard of technical and musical competence and draws out satisfying pure melody from veena. She is leading the Karnatak Jazz Fusion Group, MEGHA.

Honours & Titles	:	Hony Citizenship, Baltimore, USA Vainika Kalabhushana from Tyagaraja Ganasabha Kalaimamani from Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram Citizen Award from Rotary International District. Ganakala Sri and Karnataka Ratna.

* * *

SUKHANYA RAMGOPAL—GHATAM ARTISTE: (b. June 13, 1957)

Percussion and woman are perhaps poles apart. Percussion continues to be a near-male-monopoly. In medical parlance, percuss is to tap gently with finger or instrument to diagnose. But when it comes to 'percussion' in musical sphere, usually it means 'forcible striking' of something - an instrument or otherwise. Perhaps, man in his chivalrous mood thought of retaining this 'forcible striking' task to himself or perhaps he was nervous of allowing the fair sex to get trained in it for obvious reasons. We see scores of woman vocalists and instrumentalists but few percussionists! The first lady-mridangist is known to be Tirugokarnam Ranganayaki Ammal (Pudukottai) and there has probably been none playing on ghatam.

Sukhanya Ramgopal is now an accomplished, prominent and popular ghatam player of repute. She has won acclaim in India and abroad and is 'A' grade artiste of All India Radio. She has been providing accompaniment to numerous vidwans in sabhas, radio, television etc. with merit and grace. She has conducted and participated in many talavadya programmes. She is the reigning lady with the ghatam!

Place of birth	:	Mayiladuthurai (Thanjavur district)
Parents	:	K. Subramanyan & S. Renganayaki
Training in ghatam	:	T.H. Vinayakaram, the ghatam maestro and his knowledgeabl father, Harihara Sarma for six years.
Debut	:	At about the age of fifteen
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Science
Concert tours	:	UK, USA, Canada - 1993 & 1996

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Sukhanya Ramgopal has developed *'Laya Raga Sangama'* where a raga is played with six ghatams with different *srutis* (pitch), presumably on the model of jalatarangam. Cups with water may produce ringing, resonant tones but ghatam to produce sounds to formulate a raga is a herculean task. And Sukhanya has done it! No wonder, this great grand-daughter of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, the foremost of tamil research scholars hailed as the Father of Tamil Research, is capable of originality!

* * *

Dr. V.P.K. SUNDARAM — MUSICOLOGIST:

Learnt tamil under	:	Navalar S. Somasundara Bharati
Learnt music under	:	S. Sankarasivam
Post held	:	Tamil Lecturer, American College, Madurai (retired).

V.P.K. Sundaram got his doctorate from Madurai-Kamraj University under the guidance of Dr. S. Ramanathan, the late lamented musician, with his thesis *Palam Tamil Ilakkiattil Isai Eyal* - Musicology in ancient tamil literature. He has authored research works and is closely connected with the *pan* research proceedings of Madras Tamil Isai Sangham. He was involved in the work of Bharatidasan University in compiling a digest of musical terms. He has authored the commentary on *Panchamarabu* of Serai Arivanar published in 1991.

Sundaram regrets that though some creditable works have been brought out by prominent authorities like Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, Thanjavur M. Abraham Pandithar and Dr.S. Ramanathan, **effort had not been made to correlate the views of all** of them and bring out a codified version for the benefit of the public. He states that he has made some initial efforts in his work in this direction. He points out —

> The basic *Perum pan* of old, viz., *Mullai yal - Sempalai* is the present *Harikhamboji* and not *Sankarabharanam* or *Kharaharapriya* as assumed by some;
>
> If *Risaba* of *Harikhamboji* is taken as *adhara sruti* and sung upto *Risaba* in upper sthayi, it would be *Natabairavi* and not *Kalyani* as contended by some.
>
> Ragas related to 17 out of 20 *pans* by hymnodists do not accord with the descriptions in old literature.
>
> To relate *Kurinji* to *Harikhamboji* is not correct.

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He has advised that the averments of all authorities in respect of each *paṇ* should be listed out and research done thereon to get at the proper decisions. Certainly a welcome suggestion for the Paṇ Research body of Tamil Sangham to consider.

* * *

DEVAKOTTAI SUNDARARAJA AYYANGAR - KANJIRA ARTISTE: (c. 1901 - 1970)

Parents : Azhagarswami Ayyangar & Soundaravalli Ammal
Devakottai Veenai Narayana Ayyangar was his younger brother

He learnt mridangam from Srinivasa Ayyangar but switched over to kanjira later.

* * *

ANOOR SURYANARAYANA — VOCALIST & NATTUVANAR :

Second son of Vine Subbaraya Sastri, Suryanarayana was a multi-faceted personality. For instance Sir C.V. Raman, the Nobel Laureate, appreciating the convincing musical talents of young Suryanarayana, presented him with a picture of Sri Rama and money. Likewise Ramgopal, the eminent bharatanatya star, struck with the proficiency of the lad's music took him to Bombay. Suryanarayana got a chance to proceed on a world tour with U.S. Krishna Rao and Tara Chaudhri as Chief Vocalist of the popular troupe. His vocal recitals had been broadcast from the Bangalore, Madras and Mysore kendras of Akash Vani.

Suryanarayana learnt nattuvangam from the celebrated Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai and performed as such during the world-wide recital tours of Indrani Rehman. He was an expert in bharatanatya, kuchipudi and kathakali too. He had given many recitals at Sabhas, etc. He was inspired by the music of H. Puttachar and Ratnagiri Subba Sastri and the dramatic calibre of Devadu Narasimha Sastri.

He founded the Lalita Kala Bharati and was Director of Music, Nataka Mandali of Subbayya Nayudu, a famous dramatist.

Title : Gana Vidyadhara.

* * *

UMAYALPURAM SWAMI BHAGAVATAR — VOCALIST: (1835-1930)

Name of father : Vengu Bhagavatar

Names of uncles : Krishna Bhagavatar and Sundara Bhagavatar, the renowned disciples of Tyagaraja.

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Musical training under	:	Krishna Bhagavatar along with Umayalpuram Swaminatha Ayyar
Disciples	:	G. Kalyanarama Ayyar Sathur Krishna Ayyangar

Following the example of Saint Tyagaraja to whom the Umayalpuram family had special dedication, Swami Bhagavatar used to go regularly on *uncchavrtti* rounds (to collect unsolicited alms) singing devotional pieces. He has performed *bhajans* in Mylapore in which distinguished personages like Sri T. Muthuswami Ayyar, the first Indian Judge, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, the constitutional expert and Ramanujachariar of Ramakrishna Home had taken part. He had given concerts with his son-violinist Venkatarama Bhagavatar. His descendants arrange for memorial concerts.

* * *

SWARAMURTI VENKATANARAYANA RAO — VOCALIST:

(b. February 25, 1917)

Place of birth	:	Mysore
Father	:	Vina Ramanna, adopted son of the eminent Seshanna, Vainika
Training in music under	:	Vina Seshanna Vina Subbanna Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar Diploma in Western Music from Trinity College of Music, London

Venkatanarayana Rao was a prodigy born with a golden voice and he easily won over the attention of the Maharaja of Mysore, Gadwal Maharaja and the Nizam and secured their patronage. He was not a mere disciple but was a voice support to Muthiah Bhagavatar. He was immensely benefited by the wide travels, contacts and concerts of that maestro. Rao could play piano and jalatarang as well as harp.

Venkatanarayana Rao joined the Mysore Palace Orchestra. He imbibed the best in the styles of maestros and has been a very popular musician.

He has tuned with notation Dasar's *Devaranamas* and founded the Vina Gana Mandira named after himself. Has published a book on Veena Seshanna.

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T

T.S. THATHACHARIAR — VIOLINIST: (b. May 21, 1917)

Place of birth	:	Pavagada, Tumkur district
Father	:	Pavagada Srinivasachar, a violinist
Musical training under	:	Vina Krishnamachar Rallapalle Anantakrishna Sarma, uncle and eminent musician
Academic Qualification	:	Intermediate (Collegiate)
Post held	:	Artiste in Akashvani (1942-1977 August 31st.)

Thathachariar has been providing accompaniment to distinguished artistes and giving solo concerts also. He drew much inspiration from Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai, the renowned violinist. When Akashvani shifted from Mysore to Bangalore, he went with it and it brought him much name and fame.

Sir C.V.Raman, the Nobel Laureate, availed of his violin play as that of Anoor Suryanarayana, the Vocalist and of Sangita Kalanidhi Palghat Mani Ayyar in mridangam for his experiments on sound waves.

Publication	:	Short Life of Annamacharya
Titles & Honours	:	Karnataka Kala Tilaka by Karnataka Sangita Nrtya Academy Gana Kala Bhushana by Gana Kala Parishat Violin Vadana Nipuna by Maruti Seva Sangha, Mysore Kala Bhushana from Tyagaraja Gana Sabha, Mysore Divya Gana Anubhava by Nagerkoil Anantakrishnaswami Trust

* * *

TIRUKUTA RASAPPA KAVIRAYAR—AUTHOR OF *KURRALA KURAVANJI:* (c. Early 18th century)

Kuravanji, a socio-religious work eminently suited for bharatanatya, revolves around a Kurava girl, the gypsy-soothsayer. The term presumably had been extended to the work wherein the gypsy plays a very prominent role. *Minakshiammai Kuram* and *Kuluva natakams* are stated to belong to this category. *Kutrala (Kurrala) Kuravanji* is said to be the earliest *Kuravanji.* The heroine, Vasantavalli, a girl of matchless charm, falls in love with Tirukurralanatha, the local deity of the famous Tirukutralam, a pilgrim and tourist centre with its enchanting natural beauty enlivened by waterfalls. She passionately longs for the Lord (like Meera and Andal) and wants to be united with Him. Her friends are deeply concerned on the passionate frenzy of Vasantavalli in her effort to join the

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nayaka, the Lord. The poet's imagination runs riot in describing Vasantavalli's beauty, the Lord's procession and the advent of the gypsy-soothsayer.

The composition is in verse form and is set to tune by individual musicians to suit their taste and nature of presentation. The Lord comes in procession with His accustomed glamorous paraphernalia and a crowd of charming girls throng to have a glimpse of Him. How do they rush in? A girl rushes out forgetting to wear bangles in the second arm; another girl tries to wear the blouse in the hurry as underwear; having applied the eye-lotion to one eye, a third runs out with the lotion in hand; and so on. Vasantavalli too joins even as she plays ball on hand and falls in instant but chaste love. The sakhis bring in the soothsayer who plays a dazzling role and foretells her wedding with Thirukurralanatha. Vasantavalli is overwhelmed by emotion and bashfulness. The gypsy kindles and plays upon her warmth for the Lord and cuts jokes:

> 'In this beautiful city, the Lord shall come seeking you;
> Your bashfulness, I shall see tomorrow how it develops then!
>
> When the fair-complexioned One comes in the evening, will
> you hide your bashfulness in your armpit?'

The *Jivātma* represented by Vasantavalli joins the Universal Soul, the *Paramātman.* The episode is enlivened by a side story of the Kurava spouse of the gypsy searching for her and joining her finally. *Kuṟavanjis* are delightful episodes with a spiritual direction where diverse *bhavas* are brought to play and this suits the need and requirements of dancers. There is music, dance, wit, humour, story and spiritual underscores. There are similar *kuṟavanjis* on Tyagesar, Kumbhesar, royalty, etc.

Kurrala Kuravanji has been composed by Trikutarasappa Kavirayar. He is a trail-blazer in this type of composition. It is not known whether he was a *vāggēyakāra* since the raga-tala description has not been given but like Arunachala Kavirayar, he had brought out a very popular piece brimming with *bhava-rasa.* Nothing much is known of him too. At the request of Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra, Veena Krishnamachariar had set to tune the songs in *Kurrala Kuravanji* and Kalakshetra presents it.

There is an interesting folk-song in the form of a lullaby. The baby does not sleep even though the mother oscillates the swing for long. So she thinks of a new theme so that the baby, arrested by the novelty of the song, would doze off. There is rain and the dove is absent. (It is in question-answer style).

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Mādappurāvē, nī malaikkellām eṅgirundāi?
Mādāvin kovilmani maṇḍappattin kīlirundēn

En konjum purāvē nān kūppiḍumpōdu eṅgirundāi?
Kurrala nātharuḍaiya gopurattin mēlirundēn.'

(Dove, where were you when it rained?
I was taking shelter under the bell-tower of Goddess.

Where were you when I called you?
I was atop the tower of Kurralanathar.)

(Source: Dr. M. Sundaram)

It is not known who authored this though it brings in the Lord of Thirukurralam. Could it be attributed to Tirukutarasappa Kavirayar? No link is seen yet for it!

Anandhi in *Kalki* (09 09 84), giving an arresting picture of Tirukrralam and its temples, mentions that Agastya, the sage, was promised to be given the vision of Lord Parameswara's marriage with Devi Parvati here, that he was not let into the temple of Vishnu and that only when on advice, he put on the insignia of vaishnavites, he was let into the sanctum sanctorum. He made the deity into a Sivalinga. To ward off the possible pain in the head of the idol, daily *abishek* is done with water saturated with herbal oils!

* * *

TIRUMALAI RAJAMMA — VEENA ARTISTE: (b. November 20, 1900)

Place of birth	:	Tumkur in Karnataka	
Father	:	Raghavachariar	
Training in music under	:	Krishna Ayyangar & Gopal Rao (Vainika)	
Honours	:	Rajya Sahitya Academy Award	in 1968
		Special Souvenir to commemorate her services	in 1972

Tirumalai Rajamma was a prominent veena artiste who had the distinction to play before Gandhiji at the Belgaum Session of All India Congress Committee and again during his memorable fast in 1927. The Father of the Nation had deep appreciation for her rendition. Thathachariar, her husband, was a prominent person who ran the Viswa Karnataka. Rajamma was a gifted writer who composed songs and wrote articles under the pen-name of Bharati.

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She has presented three *kavyanatakas,* viz *Tapasvini, Maha Sati* and *Vatsalya Taranga Lila.*

* * *

TULAJA II — VAINIKA & PATRON: (1763 - 1787)

'It is a remarkable coincidence that the reigns of Tulaja II, of his brother Amar Singh and of his son, Serfoji II marked the GOLDEN AGE in the history and development of Carnatic music...They were the contemporaries of the Trinity of Carnatic music', observes B. Natarajan.

Tulaja II was a vainika and was well versed in the theory and practice of Carnatic music. His Court enjoyed the presence of a galaxy of musicians, like-

> Sonti Venkataramanayya, guru of Tyagaraja,
> Mahadeva Annavi of Tirunelveli, nattuvanar known for his compositions,
> Gangaimuthu and Subbaraya Oduvar, eminent dance teachers (the
> latter being father of the well-known Tanjore Quartette) etc.

Viriboni fame Adippiah, Melattur Venkatarama Sastri, the distinguished Bhagavata Mela exponent, Arunachala Kavirayar of *Rama Nataka* fame and Papanasa Mudaliar, author of *Kumbhesa Kuravanji* and popular songs like *Naḍamāḍittirinda Umadu eḍadu kāl* flourished during this period.

(Perhaps there is some discrepancy in dates given by B. Natarajan in his magnum opus, *Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini* at pages 48-51: "Tulaja II 1763-1787" vis-a-vis "Tulaja II died in 1783" and Pallavi Doraiswami Iyer 1782-1816 adorning Tulaja II's Court since Iyer would have been an infant when the ruler died.)

U

UMA GOPALASWAMY — VOCALIST: (b. August 15 1948)

Academic Qualification : M.A. (Music), Bangalore University

Musical training under : Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan for twelve years.

Uma Gopalaswamy has been giving large numbers of concerts for All India Radio, with which she is in 'A' grade, Doordarshan, sabhas and distinguished institutions in South India. Has given lecture-demonstrations and is a Guest-Lecturer, Bangalore University. Enjoys a pleasing voice and captivating

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presentation. A popular singita vidushi, her raga delineation and *swara prastara* are well inspired.

V

THANJAVUR VAIDYANATHA AYYAR — MRIDANGAM MAESTRO:

(1894 - April 13, 1947)

Place of birth	:	Vaiyacheri near Thanjavur (a cradle of music which presented Anai-Ayya, Ramaswami Sivan and Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar)
Father	:	Subramania Ayyar (brother-in-law of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar)
Percussion training under	:	Thanjavur Doss Swamigal Kannuswami Nattuvanar and his son, K. Ponniah Pillai who became a Sangita Kalanidhi.

Vaidyanatha Ayyar had training for sixteen long years and blossomed into a maestro known for his technical excellence and brilliance of mesmerising fingering. Had innovated and developed separate *mohras* for all the 35 talas, devised diverse *korvai-s, teermanams,* etc. and had brought out many renowned mridangists of fame. His disciples included Thambuswami (brother of T.M. Theagarajan), Palghat Mani, T.K. Murthy, Mangudi Dorairaja Ayyar and a host of others.

Vaidyanatha Ayyar was an institution by himself and students flocked to him. A model teacher, he shaped the future of many with loving care. He started playing for harikatha maestros of the period and provided accompaniment to stalwart musicians. Was mridanga artiste at the State Broadcasting Station, Trivandrum.

> Dr.T.K. Murthy was with him from the age of nine to thirty-four. 'My guru was *mātā, pitā, guru* and *deivam* to me, He was a real Titan among gurus', says Murthy
>
> 'His was the royal way and there will never again be the likes of him', said Palghat Mani Ayyar.

A stern teacher and taskmaster, kind personally, a wizard in his percussive sphere, Vaidyanatha Ayyar rose from poor means to be loved and ever-remembered by the musical world for his absolute mastery and shaping what came later to be called the 'Tanjore bani' of mridangam play. He believed in the bright future of his pupils and ensured it providing them with his golden touch. Palghat Mani once could not get at a laya combination and would not take his meal. The guru waited till he was able to solve and get it. That was his

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degree of solicitude! It was *gurukulavasa* in letter and spirit. The only two Sangita Kalanidhis from the percussive field are his disciples.

* * *

SULAMANGALAM VAIDYANATHA BHAGAVATAR — HARIKATHA MAESTRO: (1868 - October 21, 1943)

Harikatha Kālakṣēpam was at its zenith of popularity. Religious fervour and anxiety to hear moral and spiritual stories, puranas, etc. with music led to unprecedented crowds gathering to hear whether the place of rendition was rural or urban. Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar was among the stalwarts of the days.

Place of birth & Samadhi	:	Sulamangalam (near Thanjavur)
Academic Qualification	:	F.A. (collegiate) & Teachers Training. (Rt. Hon'ble V.S. Srinivasa Sastri and C.R. Srinivasa Ayyangar were classmates. The collegiate education was at Pudukottai and teacher's training was at Saidapet.)

Inspired by the marvellous *kālakṣēpams* of Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar, he left off service as a school head-master and took to *kālakṣēpams.* An ardent admirer of Tyagaraja, he lavishly utilised his songs and composed the requisite tamil *nirupanams* (songs) apart from drawing on the songs of Nayanmars, etc. He was a linguist and arranged for the enactment of telugu pieces also.

'Siva Lila' and *'Sakti Lila'* were his dramas which were enacted by prominent dramatists like Nawab Rajamanickam Pillai and T.K.S. Brothers. His celebration of Radha Kalyanam annually at his house drew the musical galaxy to it and he was popular. He was the Secretary of the Chinna Katchi of Panju Bhagavatar celebrating the *Ārādhana* of Tyagaraja at Tiruvaiyaru for four decades.

* * *

N.S. VAIDYANATHAN — MUSICIAN-COMPOSER: (b. November 20, 1926)

Place of birth	:	Tiruchirapalli
Parents	:	N.S. Sambasiva Ayyar and Subbulakshmi
Academic Qualification	:	Master of Arts.
Musical background	:	Grandfather Swaminatha Sastri was a vainika; uncle F.G. Natesa Ayyar was a dramatist of renown. Maternal grandfather, S. Bala krishna Ayyar was a good singer and dramatist. Mother had training under Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar.

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Musical training under	:	Mother and grandfather Calcutta A. Anantakrishna Ayyar Calcutta Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar
Debut	:	1946 at Tiruchirapalli at a temple festival.

Vaidyanathan has a large repertoire of songs of different *vāggēyakāras.* Had been giving concerts for All India Radio and at other places and had elicited appreciation of H.H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal and top artistes. Though he was in employment successively at Calcutta and Madras, Vaidyanathan's prime ambition was to climb up the ladder in the field of music backed as he is with a musical tradition in family and close contacts with musicians like Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar in younger days and later. Has given musical discourses.

Vaidyanathan is a linguist and a harmonist and has accompanied stalwarts. He claims that if one hears him play harmonium, the prejudice against that instrument will vanish due to his unique style and competency in coaxing it to yield to Carnatic nuances.

Publications	:	*Sri Guruvayurappan Trisati Nāmāvali from Nārāyanīyam* *Tirukadavur Abhiramiammai Stutimālai inspired by Abhirāmi Antādi* *Sri Siruvachur Madurakali Stutimālai and pāmalai* *Sri Devi Panchasatāksari Mantramālai*
Honours and Titles	:	Kaviratna by Swami Sivananda of Risikesh Sangita Bhaskara for pallavi singing in 1965 Sentamil Isai Selvar for popularising songs of Tamil Composers. Isai Vithakar by Bharati Fine Arts, Madras.

Vaidyanathan has been composing songs with passionate fervour at jet speed and some have been published as cited. For lecture-demonstrations, he is very well equipped and enjoys scholarly presentation. He regrets that lack of patronage and opportunity had robbed him of his due place.

* * *

BELAKAVADI VARADARAJA AYYANGAR — VOCALIST:

(b. April 20, 1912)

Amidst musical environment and tradition, Varadaraja Ayyangar was born in the fertile Mandya district, Karnataka.

Father	:	Srinivasa Ayyangar, musician and guru to many. Elder brother Srinivasa Ayyangar (Jr) was a musician-teacher. Younger brother, Rangaswami Ayyangar too was a musician.

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Training in music under : Titte Narayana Ayyangar
Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar (15 years)

Debut at : Sarada Vilasa High School, Mysore during Vinayaka Caturti festival.

The long period of under-study with the maestro Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar and constant company during his intense travels clothed Varadaraja with high musical skill, expertise and self-reliance. Sangita Kalanidhi Mani Ayyar was for sometime a co-student with him. He made his debut in 1935 and has since then been giving concerts in large numbers. He had given training in music to many. He could play sitar, violin and vina and used to sing as he plays.

Varadaraja Ayyangar was Asthana Vidwan, Mysore Court. Was also Examiner, Government Examinations.

* * *

VASANTHA RAMANUJAM — VOCALIST: (b. June 1, 1948)

Place of birth : Mysore

Parents : Gopala Ayyangar - Vedammal

Academic Qualification : Bachelor of Arts.

A musical environment in family with aunt Thangamani and uncle Ramu, a disciple of the eminent Bidāram Krishnappa, gave a fillip to the innate tastes and talents of young Vasantha. Sangita Chudamani B.K. Padmanabha Rao gave her the initial training and in her eighth year, she had occasion to exhibit her musical skill and abilities before a distinguished gathering which included Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore T. Chowdiah, who was all praise for her rendition and hailed Vasantha as 'Karnataka MSS in the making'! Vasantha continued her training under distinguished musicians like Violinist Mysore Mahadevappa and the great veteran R.K. Srikantan. Anoor Ramakrishna, the celebrated violinist, further consolidated her repertoire, refinement and range.

Raghusutha, musical critic and author, quoting the proverb *Vivāham Vidyā Nāsanam* says that marriage of Vasantha with IPS Officer Dr.P.S. Ramanujam, who rose up to the top echelons of the service, freezed much of her musical training and indulgence. Official constraints prevented giving concerts too. Vasantha Ramanujam could avail of opportunities to give concerts only after these constraints could get relaxed. She has been giving concerts at various fora like Akashvani, Doordarshan, sabhas and institutions and for festivals arranged by the Government, South Zone and South-Central Zone Cultural Councils, etc. She is involved in the devotional music programs of Bangalore

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Doordarshan also. 'Her nimble voice has an impressive reach and solidity. There is felicity and flourish in her impressions honed to the traditional format.'

Vasantha's daughters and many others are being trained by her. She has given cassettes that are popular. She is an 'A' grade artiste.

Title	:	Gānavishārade by Jhenkara and Gayatri Seva Samiti, Bangalore.
Concert tours	:	Andaman and Niccobar.

* * *

PARUR R. VENKATARAMAN — VIOLINIST: (b. July 20, 1931)

Place of birth	:	Parur
Parents	:	Parur Rama Bhagavatar & Minakshi Ammal
Music training under	:	Father (from the age of five) Parur S. Anantaraman, Music Director, Gemini Studios, Madras and a cousin.
Debut	:	Sri Sai Samaj, Mylapore in 1947
Specialised training	:	Dikshitar kritis from Kallidaikurichi Mahadeva Bhagavatar Western music (violin) in violin techniques Laya from Kumbakonam Rajappa Ayyar Pallavi play from Flute Venkatarama Ayyar
Posts occupied	:	Served in All India Radio Lecturer in Violin, University of Madras and retired on August 1, 1991.

Parur is between Alapuzha and Tiruchur. Parur S. Anantaraman mentioned above is different from M.S. Anantaraman but he was also a disciple of Parur S. Sundaram Ayyar who was a student of Venkataraman's father. Thus it was a celebrated family of violinists who have made violin their own. Parur has produced an illustrious crop of violinists and occupies a place analogous to Lalgudi, Rudrapatnam, etc. Venkataraman has been providing violin support to a large number of musicians and has trained a large number of students. An unostentatious orthodox style vidwan.

Has notated *Tiruppugazh* for the Sangit Nataka Academy, Madras and songs of Vedavalli Ramaswamy on Andal.

* * *

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ALATHUR VENKATESA AYYAR — A MUSICIAN OF PERFECTION:
(c. 1895-1960)

Alathur Brothers (Srinivasa Ayyar and Sivasubramania Ayyar) were the top duo vocalists of repute and eminence who dished out lavish elegance and melodic excellence in Classical Carnatic music from 1928 to 1965 with few peers. Both underwent gurukulavasa under the renowned Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar. Sivasubramania Ayyar was the guru's son too. Like two birds of kindred spirits coming from different directions, they came together in training, delighted the music world for nearly four decades together and both were crowned Sangita Kalanidhis too. It was a rare union of two celebrities who knew how to blend their musical skills and geniuses into a common web with matchless mastery. Of course, once they had differences! On what? Srinivasa Ayyar said that Sivasubramania Ayyar should be crowned Sangita Kalanidhi first as he was his guru's son; but Sivasubramania Ayyar would not succumb to it as Srinivasa Ayyar was senior in age. They differed like enlightened children on principles. Finally it was decided by lot! One came from a telugu family and another from a tamil family. And yet, how they had acquired name, fame and repute! That life-long bondage had its source in the seed sown by the guru and watered by him with solicitude. It germinated into a grand banyan, a life-long, enduring musical partnership! Before we pass over from the disciples to the guru, a tribute to the family of classical melody may be recorded here:

> 'The music of the Alathur Brotners had an exciting blend of form and function. Their kriti singing had an unassailable clarity while their *kalpana swaras* were vibrant. Their *raga alapanas* had an aphoristic touch, brief and intuitive. They were rightly famous for their mastery and display of rhythm through *pallavis*.
>
> 'They had a very productive gurukula under that **perfectionist,** Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar. A friend of Trichy Govindaswami Pillai, Nayana Pillai of Kanchipuram, the Karaikudi Veena Brothers and Mazhavarayanendal Subbarama Bhagavatar, he exposed the young *chelas* to their *Laya Jnanam.'*
>
> — K.S. Mahadevan

* * *

Born in a comfortably affluent family, Venkatesa Ayyar flowered forth into a rarely excelled musical maestro well equipped in both *lakshana* and *lakshya.* He had his training in music under Pottai Krishna Ayyar, disciple of Fiddle Sivaramakrishna Ayyar and probably under a disciple of the famous Manambuchavadi Krishna Ayyar, a disciple of Sri Tyagaraja. His sense of laya

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was supreme; he enjoyed a rich repertoire of the compositions of the Trinity, Meesu Krishna Ayyar, Tirupati Narayanaswami and others at a time when such an asset with musicians was rather meagre. He loved *Tiruppugaḷ* and gave musical expression to it with intense passion attracted by the lyrical, musical and laya affluence in it. Surely the laya intricacies of Sri Arunagirinathar should have won over the laya perfectionist of Alathur! Sri Tyagaraja was his saint-composer of adoration and he sang his songs with lucid clarity, *bhava* and *bhakti.* N.S. Vaidyanathan who lived in his younger days close to the great musician's house and knew him very well, says that Ayyar's singing the songs of the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru with profound *bhakti* and sense of *bhava* would thrill the audience and often brought tears of ecstasy among rasikas. He further adds that because Venkatesa Ayyar was economically comfortable, he did not choose to run after concerts except on invitation. Venkatesa Ayyar was a harmonist *par excellence* and was an expert in subduing the highly independent instrument to respond to the rigours and demands of classical music. Vaidyanathan says that his play was perhaps much better than that of the famous Perur Subramania Dikshitar.

Venkatesa Ayyar was a contented, self-respecting musician who did not believe in long travels to 'deal' in his music. He sang for *atma-tṛpti* as a *nādopāsaka.* He trained many including the Brothers, the clarinet maestro A.K. Natarajan and the matinee-idol of yester decades, the sweet-voiced M.K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar. Ayyar was a disciplinarian and was strict in imparting training.

* * *

He has given notation to the songs of Meesu Krishna Ayyar. He had also given notation to six songs of Muthu Tandavar and demonstrated it before a distinguished panel set up at the Annamalai University and his version was approved. Later T.N. Swaminatha Pillai insisted that he had started giving notation to the songs of Tandavar, that his output alone should be accepted for publication and that he would opt out if not done so. He was insistent and the panel helplessly surrendered to him as Pillai was then Lecturer at the Music College of the University and as prudence and principles are unwilling partners. The approved versions of Venkatesa Ayyar were dumped! Here is what Swaminatha Pillai has himself recorded:

> 'Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar had tuned six of Tandavar's songs and had demonstrated them before the panel on the first day (presumably on January 24, 1942) and the panel had approved them. The Registrar

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asked me to set to tune the remaining 54. Without speaking much, I came out then.

'Alathur Brothers sent word through some one that the panel had approved entrusting the work to him only for songs other than the six. I had not the heart to leave any of the songs to others...'

He had his way in the context of his threat, 'Take mine or I walk out'. Later he completed his notations and ultimately they were published. That was perhaps the measure of honour he had for principles and to a senior vidwan!

If music was his staple, Venkatesa Ayyar was Ekalavya to Tyagaraja. He had passionate devotion to the saint and his songs. He founded the Sadguru Sangita Sabha at Tiruchirapalli and organised annually a ten-day Tyagaraja Utsava. He was a respected vidwan among the titans of the day like Tiger Varadachariar, Mazhavarayanendal Subbarama Ayyar and Mysore Vasudevacharya. His illustrious disciples had proved that Venkatesa Ayyar and his music were great.

* * *

SRI VIDYABHŪSANA TIRTHA SRIPADARU — SAINT-VOCALIST:

(b. July 3, 1952)

Place of birth	:	Subramanya, DK district, Karnataka
Parents in pūrvaśrama	:	K. Govindacharya and Mandakini Amma
Present status	:	Pontiff, Sri Samputa Narasimhaswamy Subramanya Mutt, Kukka, Karnataka
Musical training under	:	Father B.V. Narayana Aithal R.K. Srikantan and T.V. Gopalakrishnan
Debut at	:	Sri Rama Seva Mandali, Chamarajapet (fifteen years back)
Posts held	:	Founder-Director, Govinda Gana Sabha, a centre to promote fine arts and culture equipped with auditorium and stage
		Founder-President, Subrahmanya Mutt Education Society
		President, Parisara Samrakṣana Vedike, forum for environment education
		Founder, Pramati Prakaṣana, a publication wing to promote philosophy and literature.
		Chairman, Laya Music Vision Ltd. to preserve the great traditions of Indian Music.

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Titles & Honours :

Bhakti Sangita Samrat by Sri Krishna Gana Vidyala, Hubli
Sangita Vidyanidhi by JSS Sangita Sabha, Mysore
Presided over the First conference organised by Sri Sivaratriswara Sangita Sabha, Mysore in 1994.

The Swamiji enjoys mellifluous, emotion-packed voice which rings through the concert hall. In his rendition, there is clarity as much on *sangita* as on *sahitya* with high devotional fervour and flavour. He brings about a salutary, responsive involvement in the listeners and their participation. For over two decades he has been giving concerts at prominent centres to build the Govinda Gana Sabha auditorium named after his father and to organise annual music festivals. He is well-versed in *Madhwa Vedanta, Tarka Sastra* and Sanskrit *Sahitya*. Swamiji's *manodharma* is vast and weighty.

Swamiji's father was a musicologist and amateur actor, who founded Sri Vagiswari Sangita Nataka Sabha. It is stated that the Swamiji was inveigled into monastic order early in boyhood and that he expressed himself against it as such a step lacked conviction.

S.N. Chandrasekhar states that the sale of Swamiji's cassettes created a record and he has come to be hailed as Cassette Swamiji! He has given over 95 audio cassettes in classical and devotional music.

* * *

VIJAYALAKSHMI SUBRAMANIAM — VOCALIST: (b. Octr. 31, 1962)

Place of birth	:	Madras
Names of parents	:	S. Subramaniam & Padma
Academic Qualification	:	M.Com.
Musical Training	:	Sangeet Alankar from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Sangeet Siromani, Delhi University Initial Training under K. Padmanabhan Later under Sangita Bhushanam K. Krishnaswamy of Annamalai University Advanced training under S. Rajam, T.R. Subramaniam and V.R. Krishnan.
Post held	:	Programme Executive, All India Radio, Madras with scholarships,
Concert tours	:	Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand
Audio Cassettes.		

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Vijayalakshmi is blest with a melodious, captivating voice, a pleasant style, felicitous rendition and a charming way of presenting *alapana, kriti* and *swara.* Certainly her duties with All India Radio presents her with varied opportunity to watch at close quarters the diverse styles and modes of rendition. She has an aptitude for the *vilamba kala* contrary to present trends. Inspiration from her uncle, S. Balachander and wide-ranging training under reputed musicians of diverse styles have equipped her richly in the nuances of melody. 'She is undoubtedly sitting on a very rich lode and with her superb fluent voice that has an enviable range, her potential and talent, she can make it with telling success.' (S.P.)

* * *

VIJAYARAGHAVA NAYAK — ROYAL COMPOSER:

(Reigned 1634 or 1630 - 1673)

The rulers of the dynasty at Thanjavur were patrons of music, dance, architecture and other arts in a measure which has few parallels in history. The tiny spec of kingdom bore no comparison to the colossal artistic activity it generated and pageantry it unfolded by patronage and participation. There was a galaxy of intellectuals in every field of activity which compared well with the periods of the historic dynasties of Vijayanagar and the Guptas.

Vijayaraghava Nayak succeeded his illustrious father Raghunatha Nayak and his mother was Kalavati. The eminent scholar-minister Govinda Dikshitar who served his father and grandfather and who bore the same relationship to them as Chanakya had to Chandragupta, probably had continued during Vijayaraghava's initial period. Venkatamakhin, author of *Caturdaṇḍi Prakaśika,* served in the same capacity for sometime after his father.

Vijayaraghava Nayak authored *Raghunathabhyudaya Nāṭakam* and *Prhlāda Caritram.* B. Natarajan writes,

> 'The king was the trend-setter for *Yakshagana* tradition (folk dance-drama form). *Prhlada Caritram* abounds in *darus, vacanas, mangalam,* etc. As composer of Yakshagana works, he is reputed to have surpassed even the record of his father. 23 dramas, five *dvipadas*, one *ragada* and thirty others are put down to his credit though Prhlada Caritram, *Pūtana haranamu, Kaliyamardana* and *Krishna Vilasamu* only are available.'

Special mention needs to be made of a woman-poetess of the period - a rare tribe universally as had been mentioned in *Another Garland* (pages 33-38).

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Rangajamma, a linguist, authored Mannarudasa Vilasam describing the *'lilas'* of the royal paramour and *Usha Parinayawm.*

Kṣētrajna (1610 or 1595 - 1685) had visited the courts of Vijayaraghava and Raghunatha Nayak. It is said that his inspiration was felt by Rangajamma. The Nayak Dynasty terminated on the advent of Maratha rule in 1675 A.D. with Ekoji I.

* * *

VIJAYA RAGHUNATHA RAYA TONDAIMAN of PUDUKOTTAI — ROYAL COMPOSER: (1730 - 1769)

Rajah Raghunatha Raya created the State of Pudukottai in 1686 and augmented the territory. When he died in 1730, his grandson Vijaya Raghunatha Raya Tondaiman succeeded and consolidated the State notwithstanding the plunder and pillage of Chanda Saheb, nephew of the Nawab of Arcot. In the War of Succession to the gadi of the Nawab of Arcot between Anwaruddin and Mohammad Ali aided by the English, and Chanda Sahib aided by the French, Tondaiman sided with English-Ali Combination and when it won the war, he was rewarded by the non-levy of tribute by the Nawab. Hyder Ali of Mysore pillaged Pudukottai once during Tondaiman's time and again in 1781. Tamil Nadu lay helpless before these brigand-looters! Tondaiman found in the English a good master to serve under and in the Nawab an ally, who conferred the title of 'Raja Bahadur' on the successor of Tondaiman. To show his 'attachment and fidelity to the East India Company', and in token of the fact that 'Service to the Company was the Essence of his Existence' (his own words), Raya Raghunatha Tondaiman secured the determined foe of the English and uncompromising fighter, Veerapandia Kattabomman and handled him over enabling the English to behead him at Kayattar on October 17, 1799! (In this connection, the plight of the Rajahs of Travancore and Tanjore may be kept in view. Perhaps the Pudukottai incident was servility and betrayal at their worst for self-protection.) This is the historical aspect of his life.

Vijaya Raghunatha Raya Tondaiman was an accomplished musician and composer himself. He was a patron of musicians. Venerable Sadasiva Brahmendral had made his spiritual wanderings during this period (c. 1738). The statue of the saint adorns the entrance to the temple of Sri Brhadambal at Tirugokarnam.

Tondaiman has composed, perhaps among others, the following hailed as the *'Pancha Ratna(s)':*

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Ēzhai Pangāḷi — *Manattuyar Tīrttaruḷ*
Karuṇai Kaḍaikkaṇ — *Taruṇamīdammā*
Piravi Illāda Aruḷ

On the famous song *Pāhimām Bṛhannāyikē* under the signature of Swati Tirunal, the Elaya Raja of Travancore had stated in Swati Tirunal Souvenir, 1963 that Swati Tirunal (1813 - 1846) had close contacts with the Courts of Pudukottai and Thanjavur. The song mentions Vijaya Raghunatha. But Dr.V. Raghavan has stated:

> 'Although this *swarajati* has been current in Pudukottai, there are reasons to doubt authenticity of authorship. Vijaya Raghunatha was too early for this composition which is an imitation in sanskrit words supplied to the tune and setting of the well-known *Husēni Swarajati* which became very popular and led to many imitations...there is no reason to suppose that Swati Tirunal composed this palpable imitation for the sake of his contemporary ruler...'

VIRALIMALAI KURAVAÑJI: UNKNOWN AUTHOR: (c. 1750)

The hero of the Kuṟavanji is one Subramanya Mudaliar, son of Ekanatha Mudaliar. He was Second Administrative Officer in Pudukottai State during the period of Vijaya Raghunatha Tondaiman (1730-1769). He was a patron of arts and his ancestry is traced to the eminent Sekkizhar, author of *Periapuraṇam.* Shyamala Balakrishnan of Nṛtyālaya is credited with unearthing this work in 1957 since staging of *kuravañji*-s would appear to have gone out of practice in this century. There is a happy blending of classical and folk music. Different musical structures and literary forms have been utilised. Chinnamelam, as for bharatanatya, was availed of as accompaniment. Local *devadasis* are stated to have performed the dance-drama at the foot of the Viralimalai Hill, a Subramanya kṣetra, for long.

—Source: *Pudukottai District Gazetteer*

Z

A.D. ZAKHRIAH — VIOLINIST: (b. March 3, 1927)

Father	:	Adisayam Pillai
General Qualification	:	B.A., B.Ed.
Posts held	:	Teacher Station Artiste, Akashvani

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Zakhriah is a musical soul and had a musical background on his mother's side. His musical mind keenly watched the church choir and music of other artistes and imbibed the finer aspects in what could be called *'Swayam krisi'*. He learnt Western music from Ludwig and Carnatic music from B.S. Murthy and laya aspects from the famous Pallavi Chandrappa. He was much inspired by the style of rendition of the celebrated Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu. Plays bul-bul too. Has been giving concerts — solo or accompaniment at several centres and participates in jugalbandis. Is the recipient of awards.

If only it happens so!

Doctor Kadambari, the celebrated ophthalmologist, is punctilious in her *nādōpāsana* providing full scope to her blessed melodious voice. She sings with devotion:

"Karpagamē, Kaḍaikkaṇ pārāi" (Madhyamavati)

The devout rendition attracts the notice of Devi who is captivated by the tone and content of the song of Papanasam Sivan. She rushes to the pooja room of Kadambari but with her benevolent eyes blindfolded! Kadambari's heart sinks and with all genuine anguish and prayerful heart, she sings - again a piece of Sivan in *Bilahari:*

"Karpagāmbikē, kaḍaikaṇ pārtenai kāttaruḷ Karuṇākari!"
(Devi, pray cast a glance and protect me.)

'Kadambari, you know that I have heard your songs and am here to grant your prayers. Why insist on opening my eyes? Are you to test mine too and provide me with spectacles? Come on child!'

"Devi, I am an ophthalmologist. I look at the eyes of my patients as Thine and am successful. Even Dhritarashtra was blessed by Krishna with vision once to look at His Viswarūpa. Pray bless me with Your gracious vision."

Devi Karpagambal opened her gracious eyes shedding lustre and benediction. Perhaps absolute faith and soulful music may make such an incident true!

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PART II-D

BIOGRAPHICAL TOUCHES & EMBELLISHMENTS

TANJORE QUARTETTE : PONNIAH

'Subbudu' speaks

'We are indebted to the Tanjore Quartette for changing *sadir* into bharatanatyam with *alarippu, jatiswaram, sabdam, varnam, padam* and *tillana* and raising it to a concert-worthy art. But when kuchipudi and even odissi prosper, why bharatanatyam alone lags behind in popularity? Firstly, Ponniah's songs hover around a single theme of nayaki's hysterical anguish...The cool westerly wind scorches her; the melody of nightingale is harsh; the soft bed of flowers is full of thorns; and so on. Take *padas;* the same trends are projected with accusatory challenges like, "With whom did You spend the night?...Marks of *kumkuma* seen on Your face...!" Words have been thrust into raga outlines. Compare the *varnam* of Ponniah:

"Sakhiyē, inda vēḷaiyil jālam seyyādē!
Endan Swamiyai aḷaittuvādi."

with the song of Kannadasan:

"Pālirukkum, paḷamirukkum pasiyirukkādu
Panjanaiyil kārruvarum tūkkam varādu."

How Kannadasan extracts the passionate love-lorn longings of the lady! How elegance and brevity thrive in his songs!'

The criticism is not well-founded. Ponniah (b. 1804) was a classicist *par excellence* while Kannadasan belongs to the neo-classical age. Ponniah wrote for the classical dancer but Kannadasan wrote for films. Ponniah's songs are intended to bring out the artistic exuberance of the dancer. Ponniah composed, brought out diverse *bhavas* and taught to **dance.** Kannadasan composed for others to **sing.** Bharatnatyam was not his ultimate market to present the songs. Further Ponniah could be described as having composed and handled classes on Kalidasa and Kambar while Kannadasan composed and took up classes for *avant garde* poetry, songs and fiction like Kalki's *Kaḷvanin Kadali.* Tastes, aptitudes, modes of presentation, levels of appreciation continue to change. Here it is relevant to recollect the pregnant observations of Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar that musical titans of yester ages were reluctant to record their songs since what was celestial could be looked upon as bland later on and they wanted their rendition to be stored in the verdant cerebral recesses of rasikas and not in discardable discs. It is also relevant to take notice of the difference in the styles of Kambar and Bharati, Milton and Shakespeare and Bernard Shah.

* * *

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GURU TO PURANDARA DASA:

'*Sree Vardhana Prabandham* quoted by Tulaja in *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛta* starts with the words *Jaya Jaya Sangītāgama abhinava Bharata munirey* and concludes with *Vyāsarājam avadāraya*. From this it is evident that *Vyāsarāja* was an expert in music and *natya* and that Purandara learnt music at his feet.'

— B.V.K. Sastri in *Sruti* 125

MANDOLIN U. SRINIVAS:

(b. 1970)

'I learnt from my father for four years. Then Rudraraju Subbaraju, a disciple of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, took over. I grew up under his tutelage and I owe everything to him. I learnt about 50 to 60 songs from my father. From my guru, I learnt nearly 800 *kirtanas*. Whenever I am in Madras, I practise for four to five hours... *sarali varisais* in three *kālams*... I make it a point to practise with proper *gamakas*.'

My objectives are innovation, spontaneity and freshness.

— Srinivas to SVK : The *Hindu*

PATHS OF GLORY

'Titles bring no extra pupils, nor does a jewelled order ensure commissions or engagements', said F.J. Crowest. Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri declined offers from rulers. Even recently, Karaikudi R. Mani, mridangam maestro, declined the offer of the title Kalaimamani.

On one occasion, Beethoven was offered the choice of fifty ducats or the cross of some order. 'Beethoven was not long in deciding, "The fifty ducats" in his blunt and independent manner.'

KĀLAKṢĒPA, the LOST ART & EVER-GREEN ARTISTES:

'Kālakṣēpa' literally means passing away time but it assumed a new connotation when musical discourses known as *pravachanam* came to be substituted by the highly attractive art of *harikatha*. The turning point was the arrival at Thanjavur in 1866 of Ramachandra Bhave known as Morkar Buva, during the time of the last Maratha ruler Shivaji. He was an outstanding kirtankār from Gwalior and Shivaji arranged for his teaching local students. Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar (1847-1903) hailed as the Father of Tamil Harikatha became an ardent student. He fashioned his own style and became a legend and later exponents embellished the art.'

(T.S. Parthasarathy)

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Kālakṣēpa, true to its original meaning, was favoured to pass off time with the benefits of being fed with succulent stories from *Puranas* and *Upaniṣads* spreading *bhakti* and morality with absorbing music, wit and humour, anecdotes and even elementary dancing. It was the craze of the populace till the 1950s of this century when interest in Kālakṣēpa began to wane with the aggressive advents of cinema and television though these do not cater much to elevate and enlighten. Kālakṣēpa ruled the field like a colossus for a century and went the way *gurukulavasa* had taken and drama is taking.

A few artistes still hold on to the last vestiges of the art and the bastion with miserable public response. In fact, present environment could ill-stomach a harikatha artiste with his *chiplakkattai* and other old paraphernalia even as it would not an artiste giving the Kālakṣēpa in full suit, shoes and hat, a shrubby moustache and sideburns.

Here is a description by the popular writer Kalki:

> 'The very appearance of **Mangudi Chidambara Bhagavatar** was charmingly humorous. Charlie Chaplin and other renowned comic actors had to suppress their natural personality with artificial make-up to induce humour. But just a look at the natural figure of Bhagavatar is enough to bring out explosive laughter. Every turn of his body, even his sitting on a bench and rising from it would induce laughter! His dance, speeches, exposition and music would invoke boisterous participation of the listeners. When I looked around the faces of the listeners, they resembled blooming flowers in a lotus pond at dawn! Bhagavatar's countenance itself was a smiling beauty and when he indulges in humour, the whole audience would join him as if in a gay and happy excursion.' — *Ananda Vikatan* 5.5.1932

'Puns of Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar were famous. Dasaratha struggles in mid ocean ship-wrecked on his way to marriage! He prays:

> *"Swami, Nīrē ippaḍi seyyalāma;*
> *inda nīrē ippaḍi seyyalāma?"*
>
> (Lord, Should *You (nīrē)* too do so?
> Should *water (nīrē)* too do so?")

Bhagavatar brings in a dancer in his story and makes her sing:

> *"Aḷagulla ivar yāraḍi?"*
> (Who is this beautiful man?)

If a tall man enters, she would sing, *"Aḷagulla ivar* ***āraḍi!"*** meaning that this beautiful man is six feet high. If the new comer is short, she would show by action that he is short, with emphasis and pun on the word *"Aḷa* ***kulla*** *ivar yāraḍi?* (Who is this short man?)"

— *Ananda Vikatan* 17.12.1934

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BŌDHĒNDRA & *NĀMA SIDDHĀNTA:* (1610 - 1692)

'Bhagavannāma Sāmrājya Lakshmī Sarvasya Vigraham I
Srimad Bōdhēndra Yōgindra Dēsikēndramupāsmahē' II

(I worship Srimad Bōdhēndra, foremost of yogis and preceptors and embodiment of the Sāmrājya of Bhagavannāma)

'Yasya smarana matrēna nāmabhakti prajāyatē I
Tannamāmi Yatiśrēstham Bōdhēndram Jagatām Gurum II

(I worship the most illustrious saint, Bōdhēndra, the preceptor of the world. Mere recollection of him inspires devotion to the Lord.)

In his *Nāmāmṛta Rasāyanam,* Bōdhēndra Saraswati sets out the essence of *Nāma-Siddhānta* succinctly thus:

> *'Nāmakīrtana* is duly laid down in *srutis, smrtis, puranas* and other *śāstras* for the benefit of all categories of people. It destroys the whole host of sins and leads to Brhma Jnāna. Of all *dharmas,* it is the easiest, conferring auspiciousness. *Adi Sankara* has shed full light on this in his commentary on *Viṣnu Sahasranāma.* That meaning has been clarified in this *Nāmāmṛta-Rasāyanam.* May the nectar of the name of the sole Master of the Universe who is resolved to extend protection to his devotees be ever available to be invoked....'

Bōdhēndra's thesis on *nāmasiddhānta* relies a great deal on Adi Sankara's *Gita Bhāṣya* and *Viṣnu Sahasranāma Bhāṣya, Srimad Bhāgavatam, Viṣnu Purāṇa* etc., and is broadly the same as that of Lakshmidhara Kavi of Puri (author of *Bhagavan-nāma Kaumudi*). His great gifts of massive erudition, subtlety of logic, nimble mind, mastery of Pūrva *Mīmāmsā,* his authentic voice as an *Advaitin* and saintliness give Bōdhēndra an unassailable status... Violent critics put forward the theory that *Nāmakīrtana-prabhāva* was meaningless and a pundit published *Bhagavan-nāma Siddhānta Khaṇḍanam.* In his *Bhagavan-nāma Rasodaya,* Bodhendra mentioned that his work was only to repudiate the malicious attack and that 'the enemy of the preceptor is sure to go to hell'. He had high respect and admiration to the erudition of Sridhara Venkatesa Ayyaval and had regretted that he was unable to express his admiration to him by prostration being a pontiff. Surely his heart had done it though his body was precluded from doing the exercise overtly. Their constant meetings should have been ethereal flights of spiritual titans for the salvation of mankind. His eminent life is covered in *A Garland* (Pages 28-29).

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T.M. THEAGARAJAN
The Unknown Episode: (b. May 28, 1923)

Sangita Kalanidhi T.M. Theagarajan finds special mention in *A Garland* (pages 368-9). He was born in a musical family and has distinguished himself as a musician and a *guru* of standing. One particular aspect of his life was not known to this author nor was it revealed by the musician. It is described by Avvai T.K. Shanmugham, the eminent dramatic wizard, thus:

> 'Devi Bala Shanmukhananda Sabha commenced its dramas at Tanjore. A boy by name T.M. Theagarajan joined the troupe. His magical voice and unique knowledge in music attracted me. He was given the role of Sundari in Abhimanyu-Sundari. When he was being given tuitions, it would be a pleasure, a delight to me. He sang the song with *sangati* not attempted by any other.
>
> One day, when he was taking training in music, he was casually looking elsewhere. I took out the cane and tapped his head saying, "Are you listening?" The edge of the cane had injured his head and blood oozed out copiously to my utter discomfiture. He did not weep but I spent a restless night for my negligence.
>
> He will come taking the role of Valli in Valli Tirumanam. I used to act as the hunter (hero). When he sang *Inda Mānida vēdar nir kāṇ* in *Sankarabharanam,* I would stand as if in trance totally absorbed! I used to imagine that he was destined to become a great musician at a future time. It was not vain. He is the present music maestro T.M. Theagarajan!'
>
> — Avvai Shanmugham in his *Enadu Nataka Vāḻkai.*

Past vs. Present : Theagarajan to Karaikudi Mani:

'Learners of today do not show the same persistence and tenacity as we did. Their capacity for assimilation is low. They don't practise at home. In our days, it was practice, practice all the time. Today, the boy's future is not dependent on proficiency in their music. They have a choice to take or leave it.'

> 'I have a feeling that this so-called pleasing voice will disappear without the advantage of mike.'
>
> 'I must concede that percussionists are a vast improvement on the old pattern. With the advent of Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subramania Pillai and the present top mridangists, laya exploration has surged ahead.'
>
> — *'Layam' 2/7.*

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TMT, a guru to stalwarts!

'Even when I was *sisya,* many learnt songs from me. Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar (his guru's guru!) wanted to learn a few Swati Tirunal kritis. It was I who furnished the notation and rendered the songs as Semmangudi had delicacy of doing it. I also taught G.N.B., Alathur Brothers, Musiri Subramania Ayyar, Maharajapuram Santhanam, D.K. Jayaraman and M.L. Vasantakumari and the present K.V. Narayanaswami.' (Did not Sri Subrahmanya expound the significance of *Praṇava* to Lord Parameswara?)

CHEMBAI, THE VIRTUOSO: (September 1, 1896 — October 14, 1974)

A Garland (pages 391-4) gives an account of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, one of the top, popular vidwans of yester decades. He was religious fully devoted to Sri Guruvayurappa and donated much of his later-day earnings to that Lord. He was punctilious in the performance of prayers, rites and observing penance. A man of intense humour and solicitude, he was liberal in views and enlivening wherever he was. C.S. Krishna Ayyar said that he requested him to pay a visit to the music college to enthuse the students and keeping his promise, he wrote back and did give a concert. His swara rendition had a peculiar charm and his sterling vibrant tone was a rare asset. Few enjoy such a boon.

'To rear sisyas who could not ever forget the guru for his teaching and training and who bear unsullied *bhakti* and gratitude to him is the prime test of the model guru. In this, Bhagavatar was the best', says C.S. Krishna Ayyar.

It was a concert at Karaikudi. Muthu Ayyar and Sundararaja Ayyangar were the percussionists. These two took extra time on each occasion to finish off their supporting play. Chembai allowed them for sometime and said,

"You have had enough *tani* (solo) all the while.
Hence there is no need for a full-dress solo again."

(He cut off thus their *tani avarta* (solo percussion play at the concert)!

'At that concert, someone wanted him to sing a particular song.

"Well, I shall do it, if you pay rupee one."

He got a rupee (in good humour like Mahatma Gandhi among children) and sang the song.'

— C.V. Narasimhan at the Music Academy.

Chembai's grandfather was a *chakra tāna nipuna* (expert) and Chembai was a *dāna nipuna* (dharmic gifts), said T.V. Gopalakrishnan, the multi-faceted artiste and disciple of Chembai.

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R.K. Srikantan mentioned an incident at a concert. Chowdiah, the violin colossus, came with a violin with 19 strings as against his usual seven-stringed violin. Nearly 45 minutes were lost in aligning the *sruti* since it was a herculean task indeed to settle the *inter se* turbulence among 19 strings! In his usual jovial pattern, Chembai advised him to lay aside his 19-stringed instrument for use on a future auspicious date and commence with his seven-stringed one. Chowdiah had to accept since prominent as he himself was, he had genuine admiration and respect for Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar.

V.R. Krishnan, V.V. Subramaniam and T.V. Gopalakrishnan are among the disciples of Bhagavatar.

> 'Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar built his career and personality by himself and that too the hard way. His memory power was fantastic... In a concert he knew what he or the violinist or the percussionist was doing and how the audience was reacting... His awareness of time was extraordinary. His music was modelled mainly to suit his powerful, heavy, sonorous voice with built-in harmonics in the higher octave (*karvai*). He sang only those *sangatis* and musical phrases that were attractive to his voice. His *sruti* and *laya suddham* demanded the greatest exactitude from accompanists. A perfectionist.'

— Source: T.V. Gopalakrishnan in *B.G. Samaja Souvenir,* 1980.

'January 7, 1953: The performance at Suchindram was after a concert on the previous day at Trivandrum. I had sung for an hour. My voice suddenly failed. I could neither talk nor sing! I would feel as if I was talking loudly but no sound emanated! This continued for two years. Doctors said that there was nothing wrong with me. It was a mysterious failure of vocal chords.

'I had been singing on Kartigai Ekadasi at Guruvayur all along. It was 1954 and day of Ekadasi. I stood before Lord Guruvayurappan and prayed with *bhakti* and intense sorrow:

> "Gracious Lord! It has always been a marvellous experience to sing of You. And when I think that You are hearing my music, I used to feel exhilarated. Why have You rendered me unable to sing of You and kept Yourself away from my music? Do You not like *stotras?*"

'So, I went on with my fervent prayers. Vaidya Matam Nambudiri suddenly told me that he would give me a medicine. I was amazed. How could he know of my toneless prayers? For seven days, he gave me some drops. On the eighth day, I sang at Kozhikode Vanoli (radio)!

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'I decided that this musical rebirth was not mine and decided that all future remuneration should belong to Him and Him alone. From then on, taking only the to and fro charges, I submit my remuneration to Him', Chembai averred so.

ARIYAKUDI RAMANUJA AYYANGAR: (1890 - 1967)

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar was the ideal musician to G.N. Balasubramaniam. The junior Sangita Kalānidhi had many good things to say on the senior Sangita Kalānidhi. Some excerpts from his 1963 article:

'He is probably the one instance of a unique wedlock of seeming incompatibles - *Śāstra* and *Śrāvya* and tradition and modernity... He knows what a thing is about, leaving nothing to chance or the moment, preferring "how" a thing is done to "what"... That is why he is so dependable and never below par on any occasion... What the *Gita* is to Indian philosophy, the music of Ariyakudi is to Carnatic music.'

How one wishes that Time creates such stalwarts!

MALI's FATHER:

Flute wizard Mali's father was dealing in lights for livelihood. Mali showed his prodigious talents from his fifth year and in the ninth year gave concerts. The musical flame having been lighted by his son at home, the father put an end to his dealings in hurricane lights.

DRĀVIḌA ŚIŚU - HIS ACHIEVEMENT:

Adi Sankara extols Apostle Tirugnanasambandar as *Drāviḍa śiśu* (the child from the South). *Yet Another Garland* gives a full account of the Apostle of the 7th century A.D. He is the only saint to compose in all the 23 *paṇs* (ragas).

MUSICOLOGY IN TAMIL LITERATURE:

Tolkāppiam (the oldest extant work), *Śilapadikāram* (c. 5th century A.D.), *Panchamarabu* (period not known), Tirugnanasambandar's compositions and Arunagirinatar's *Tiruppugaḷ* provide ample information on musicology of tamil music. Numerous other works cited in these and other works are not available. Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar traced a host of tamil works. M. Vaidyalingam, a tamil scholar, mentioned during a lecture at the Music Academy in December 1995 that there was

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an unfortunate practice among tamils of destroying old works by fire presumably thinking that they were not wanted and should not fall into wrong hands!

Paripāḍal, a surviving work, mentions *paṇs* but not the talas as talas are self-evident and in-built.

Padinārupāṭṭu is another work in which tala finds mention but not the *paṇ* as it is said to be self-evident.

THE CARNATIC TRINITY:

An *inter se* comparison of the lives of the Carnatic Trinity has been given in *A Garland* and *Another Garland.*

Tyagaraja	*Muthuswami Dikshitar*	*Syama Sastri*
Bhakti	Jñāna	Karma Yoga
Bi-lingual composer	Uni-lingual composer (discounting two *maṇipravāḷa* kritis)	Tri-lingual composer

— Dr. V.V. Srivatsa

MOZART: (1756 - 1791)
Given a pauper's burial!

'A solitary hearse reached the distant graveyard of St. Mars in which among the third class, the great composer of symphonies, chamber-music, of G. Minor Symphony and Requiem, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was to find his resting place... accompanied only by the driver of the carriage. His was the third and uppermost in the grave for paupers! The assistant grave-digger and his mother alone were there!' Poverty, chill penury sniffed off his life so early.

A bound volume of his complete nine symphonies in his hand was sold on 22.05.1987 for £2585000 (roughly Rs.10.5 crores)! How wealthy he is!

'Oh Mozart! If I could instil into the soul of every music-lover the admiration I have for his matchless works, all countries would seek to be possessed of so great a treasure. Mozart is incomparable.'

— Heydn.

The Girl, Mozart Never Married!

"Mozart was a wonder-child. At six, he was on his second tour. The precocious wonder, how well he played even then! At the imperial palace

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Schonbrunn, he charmed all. Wolfgang stumbled and fell. Marie Antoinette hastened to pick him up.

'You are good... I shall marry you!', said the young master.

The marriage never came about!"

BACH:

(1685 - 1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach German Composer and great contrapuntal master (counterpoint melody) was a very hard worker. And he would say that anyone who worked as hard as he could produce what he had done (of course, such a worker being a genius). He said:

'The sole object of all music should be the Glory of God and pleasant recreation.'

ANDAL's SRIVILLIPUTTUR - THEN & NOW:

Sri Andal, the Divine Minstrel, whose appearance on earth was a replica of the advent of Sita of Mithila, is fully covered in *Yet Another Garland* (pages 93-97). Her Song Celestial *Tiruppavai* could be heard in the fragrant hours of dew-clad morns in the month of *Mārgaśirṣa* (December-January) from homes and temples in a measure which is, in recent decades, matched only by Ayyappa songs. *Tiruppavai* is song eternal for maidens' prosperity.

How Srivilliputtur, the sacred place of her advent, was when she spent her impressionable years of maidenhood is indicated in her songs of bewitching elegance, conception and harmony. Rains enriched it thrice a month. Paddy grew up luxuriously in fine shape and shine; fishes flitted across crops. (That pisciculture was prevalent in the eighth century may be noted!) Cows yielded copious milk. That it was a picture of abundant milk and honey is seen in the song *Ongi Ulagaḷanda Uttaman pēr pāḍi.* But this Srivilliputtur valley of high fertility is now a rain-shadow area with its hillocks bald and its rainfall uncertain. The few patches of clouds that stray into the valley, enticed perhaps by the matchless songs and advent of Sri Andal, do not feel enchanted by the denuded hills and dales. The poet takes over now:

(Clusters of clouds at a distance look like fleece rolls. When the poet reaches, alas! there are none. Another burst of clouds give hope but that too only to flirt and elude!)

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"WOOING THE CLOUDS"

(Written at Srivilliputtur)

Clusters and rolls of snowy fleece
Cradling and smiling from yon rugged hill tops
Beckoned me, a lone idler, languishing for peace
Stricken by oft-repeated droughts and loss of crops.

Shaken out of stupor I wended up the hill
Hope, desire and anxiety urging me still.
Lo! Fleece there was none. Nor Mary nor the lamb,
Downcast, disappointed, should I fall to crumbs?

No. Cool, rejuvenating was the hearty embrace.
The solicitude was exhilarating and ravishing; the touch enthralling.
Love and Hunger recognise neither caste nor race.
My heart longed, my head pleaded, for a wedlock ennobling.

In tremulous voice, stung by abject poverty,
I prayed for her godly love, couched in terms quite lofty.
Her heart seemed to melt. A tear or two her eyes let down.
Facing her vast grandeur, trembling and forelorn, I felt like a clown.

Her countenance changed. Accursed and weak,
I had burnt all the woods in greedy exploitation;
And laid my lands barren, my hills bald and bleak!
Heat, sweat and dust drove her to exasperation!!

Ah! Now she condescends. Calls me and my village dear.
'Not that I love you less, but yon woods, I love more'.
Almost whispering it so, lest another should hear
Sails she fast with wind, laughing viciously at me once more.

MAHARAJAPURAM MAESTRO: (1896 - 1970)

Triumphal Procession: 1955. Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar (Carnatic Vocal), T.N. Rajarathinam (Carnatic Instrumental) and Bal Gandharva (Hindustani Vocal) were honoured with Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards.

The music-lovers of Thanjavur district took out the first two on a triumphal procession along the streets of Kumbakonam, a citadel of art then, accompanied by thirty pairs of nagaswara vidwans!

Dress: Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar was noted for his sartorial elegance and immaculacy. He used to tell K. Sundar Rajan, 'A musician's music is only as good as his looks. People expect not only good music but a good appearance too...If, as a result of minding my appearance. I get into

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embarrassing situations, well, it can't be helped'. No wonder such situations presented themselves.

— Source *Sruti* 95

Age was no bar to learn: Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar learnt two or three songs from the musician-artiste, S. Rajam who was twenty-three years younger...when the latter was a teenager. Ayyar would take Rajam to the connoisseur's delight, Sastri's Hotel in South Mada Street, Mylapore and ask him to repeat the songs feeding him with the celebrated halwa there! *Quid pro quo!* Likewise he learnt a few songs of Swati Tirunal Maharajah from T.M. Theagarajan when the latter himself was just a disciple of Semmangudi Dr. Srinivasa Ayyar, a disciple of Maharajapuram! It was all quest after excellence and status was no deterrent.

Style: 'Viswanatha Ayyar's style was his own. He did not want his disciples to sing like him: his style, in any case, be termed inimitable. Yet Kumbakonam Chakrapani, a disciple who had the same type of voice as his master, did for some time sing and even talk like Ayyar.'

— S. Rajam in *Sruti*

Unfortunately Chakrapani was not blest with luck! He had taught my daughter too. A good musician, he died a few years back.

'Occasionally there is born an artist whose qualities are unique, personal and non-transferable. Such men cannot be replaced or followed nor can they found a school or system. They live and die in a kind of fierce isolation shedding a brilliance...I have known three such artists - the great Tiger Varadachariar, to a lesser extent T.N. Rajarathinam. Maharajapuram was the third.'

— S.Y. Krishnaswamy, I.C.S. (Rtd.) in *Sruti*

Raksa Bandhana! Forgetfulness is not an unusual malady, but strenuous practice helps to overcome it. Not infrequently, a few musicians have before them the script. Dr. Balamurali Krishna said that the practice came to be imbibed by him probably because of his association with films where a song is sung by the play-back musician but once and finally too, there being no need to memorise it.

Yathi Sri Ramanānandēndra Saraswati Swamigal writes in *M.V.A. Souvenir*, 1988:

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'I spoke after the concert of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar highlighting his greatness. He did not agree with me on certain matters.

> "I know I have some strong points, but I forget the text sometimes. I become absent-minded. That gives me a fright while I sing. If somebody could give me a *rakṣa* that would save me from ducking."

We took him to Maruvur Krishna Ayyangar, a siddhar. Ayyangar asked Maharajapuram, and all of us too, to take bath. Maharajapuram playfully jerked to a song commenting on the COLD welcome. When we stood reverentially before the siddhar, he gave a *rakṣa* to Maharajapuram and whispered the Ucchiṣṭa Ganapati *mantra* in my ears.'

MUKHĀBHINAYA (Facial Expressions): 'Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar enjoys an attractive personality and looks. If his music is enchanting feast to the ear, his flashing, mischievous and bright facial expressions are a delight to the eye. Now it is brimful *brhmānanda;* then reverential *bhakti*; it leads on to sympathy and *kāruṇya* gives place to intellectual radiance and so on. His facial expressions are an index to the *bhāva-rasa* soaked music and songs. His charming face exuded all the *gāyaka lakshaṇas.* His vivacious eyes will ever be rolling shedding intelligence, charm and mischief and reflect the unfading smile on his lips. The four-hour concert, it was all pin-drop silence. The audience forgot to applaud. (It was *advaitic* surrender to melody!) When I returned home, my heart declined to believe the ears and the ears refused to heed to the heart. Each was dancing and revelling independently in melodic divine joy, as it were....'

— Nilam in *Sangita Navamanigal* (1946) &
A review in *Saṅgīta Abhimāni.*

ON THE 'TIGER' AGAIN! (1876 - 1950)

A Garland and *Another Garland* deal with the veteran Tiger Varadachariar. Here is yet another view:

> 'Rukmini Devi often said that we were to take the best in any person and not be carried away by outward appearances. She would often humorously say that one should admire the beauty of Tiger Varadachariar's music and not dwell upon his dark hue or pot belly. In this context I remember Varadachariar singing a line from the *padam* in ever so many ways and then showing us *abhinaya* for the same. His *bhāva* was beautiful.'

— S. Sarada (*Sruti* 136)

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Many might not have had occasion to see or hear "Tiger". That he demonstrated the *bhāvas* with *abhinayam* shows the colossal immensity of his artistic soul and memorable eloquency. He ranks with Gopalakrishna Bharati, Socrates and others who were so lavishly blest with fragrant, glamorous, inner beauty that God had little time left to polish off the exterior! A melodic, witty, knowledgeable Maha Vidwan and a true Sangita Kalanidhi, he drew all-round praise and respect not only during his life but continues to do so!

SAGE ADVICE! DEVASTATING?

'I had composed nearly forty or fifty *kirtans*. To get the blessings of Kanchi Paramacharya, I handed over the volume to him. He ran his eyes and plainly told me, "Your compositions are good".

(How sweet was it to hear so!)

"Stop composing *kirtanas*!"

(It was a bombshell!)

'I was acutely disappointed and asked him, "Are there any flaws?"

'The great sage merely said,

"Take my advice. If you want, compose *tillanas*, not *kirtanas*."

I have refrained from the role of *vāggēyakāra* but have, composed some tillanas.'

— Srimushnam Raja Rao,
renowned mridangist.

A significant sage advice of a sage pregnant with depth!

WHAT AM I HERE FOR?

'I am here to sing Thee songs.
In this hall of Thine I have a corner seat.
In Thy world I have work to do; my useless
life can only break out in tunes without a purpose.

'When the hour strikes for Thy silent worship
at the dark temple of midnight,
command me, my master,
to stand before Thee to sing.'

— *Gitanjali* : Rabindranath Tagore

S. SATYAMURTHY:

A parliamentarian of rare calibre, freedom-fighter who suffered incarceration and a connoisseur of arts, S. Satyamurthy was associated with music, dance

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and dramas. I have sublime memory of his memorable speech at the Congress Exhibition then held in and near Congress House, Madras on the occasion of the bharatanatya of Balasaraswati. Here is what Avvai T.K. Shanmugham, a stalwart among dramatists, says:

> 'Satyamurthy Ayyar was accompanying Jawaharlal Nehru in his tours. A patriot, rasika of arts, he had acted in dramas of Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar... He was full of praise for including the song of Mahakavi Bharati, *'Vāḷga nirandaram, Vāḷga tamiḻtondu, Vāḷiya Vāḷiyavē*, in the film Mēnaka.
>
> 'Satyamurti asked me to continue singing when Nehruji, Kamala Nehru and Indira arrived at the meeting site at Karur and confided to Nehruji my contributions to drama. When I concluded, Nehruji called me and praised me.
>
> 'Later we made it a feature to sing the song at the end of all our dramas. The suggestion of Ma.Po. Sivagnana Gramani was also to this effect.'

Those were the golden days of vibrant, uninhibited patriotism prior to independence though a section of the community even in that atmosphere of pristine purity thrived serving the interests of the imperial power. Artistes rose to the occasion in a magnificent measure that should be inscribed in golden letters in the annals of Independence Movement. Those who had enjoyed then the unalloyed national spirit and sense of sublime sacrifice would, in the present context, sing with the venerable Vaishnavite Alwar, *'Acchuvai perinum vēṇḍēn, Araṅgamā nagarulanē'* to recapture the absolute sense of all-round sacrifice and will *NOT* opt for any other boon or benefit, however himalayan it be.

VEDANAYAKAM PILLAI - SATIRICAL BRILLIANCE:

(Oct. 20, 1826 - July 31, 1889)

A Garland (pages 404-405) presents an account of the remarkable composer of songs in tamil and a contemporary-admirer of Gopalakrishna Bharati. Some specimen of his robust outlook on life and laudable faiths and beliefs are resurrected below.

> **'If the Chief Authority happens to be drawn from a family of poor character or morals, he will tend to hand over power to drunkards or corrupt and discredited persons. He will instead harass the honest.' (The view is fully borne out by his personal experience when he was in Judicial Service.)**
>
> **'The post of dubious value had left me; I remain still with my intellect, honesty and character intact; my tongue still plays its role freely. Old friends remain; their legs are in sound**

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condition to move out. My doors are kept ajar. Wonder why they fail to turn up!'

Pillai gives expression to a familiar universal truth known and rigidly practised that power attracts and retirement repels. *(Tōmirunda toḷilonṟai toḷaindadanṟi...)*

One sees constant warnings against immoral contacts to ward off AIDS. More than a century back, Pillai sang:

'Mēgaṅgal yāvum uyar viṇ niṅgi vēsaiyar tam
Dēhangaḷil vāsam seigaiyān ....'

(*Megam* means cloud and in medical field, an incurable skin disease. Pillai says how there could be clouds in the skies when they have all taken safe refuge in the bodies of disreputable women. A clinching pun to drive home his point against trade in flesh.)

Pseudo ascetics? He draws on the episode of Lord Siva taking River Ganges in his hairlocks and sings that many sanyasis fold up women in their heavy hairlocks!

Depravity among brahmins? He sings pathetically,

'Mouths that should chant sacred Vedas
consume toddy and consume meat.'

Should not the animals which happen to be victims be protected and saved? He avers 'yes' and points out how Siva holds the deer in his hands, Murugan has the cock in his flag, Cupid (Manmatha) took in the fish in his flag and Murugan took the goat as his own mount - all to save these hapless animals from *Vātāpi Jīrṇō bhava!* Well they may be saved; but what about the Creator who created the gluttonous consumers? Siva punished him too by chopping off one of his heads! Quite a pregnant presentation full of imaginative netting of *puranic* episodes!!

Visitor comes and praises the Munsif-Poet in high terms comparing him to Meru, a mountain, Karpagam for gifts, Nandi, sacred bull for strength and Adisesha for his wisdom. Pillai calmly called him in return, 'Stone, tree, bull and snake' putting the visitor to shame. Pillai had a keen intellect, intolerance of misdeeds and social travails; and brought out his reaction in his songs. The good samaritan was naturally hailed as *Purusha Meru* by Gopalakrishna Bharati.

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BHARAT CRIED:

It was the turbulent phase in the struggle for independence. Aurobindo appealed to the primordial Shakti that is India in his *Hymn to Durga* :

> 'Mother Durga! India lies low in selfishness and fearfulness and littleness. Make us great; make our efforts great; our hearts vast; make us true to our resolve. May we no longer desire the small, void of energy, given to laziness, stricken with fear.
>
> 'Mother Durga! slay the enemy within; then root out all obstacles abroad. May the noble heroic Indian race, supreme in love and unity, truth and strength, **arts and letters,** force and knowledge, ever dwell...'

Bharati, Nilakanta Sivan, Vedanayakam Pillai, Viswanatha Sastri and a host of poets of grace, nobility, spiritual excellence have given vent to such pangs of heart. Aurobindo had explained that Durga here stands for the Living Soul of Bharat common to all communities. How relevant is the hymn today!

— Source: M.N. Das in *Heritage.*

The 'AMATEUR' SHE WAS NOT!

'Journalism largely consists in saying, "Lord Jones is dead" to people who never knew Lord Jones was alive', said Chesterton. Ramachandran, the capable Founder-Secretary of Hamsadhwani, Madras was earlier in the world of journalists! He introduced popular Aruna Sairam (b. October 30, 1952) as a distinguished amateur who compared extremely well with professionals. He was seeking to enlighten many of us who could not make out the difference between amateurs and professionals among Classical Carnatic musicians!

W.R. Inge once said, 'The distinction between literature and journalism is becoming blurred'. To end possible conjectures and confusion leading to a like contingency, Aruna Sairam promptly clarified, 'I am as much a professional as any other viewed in the context of concerts given, etc.'

VEENA DHANAMMAL - VEENA COLOSSUS: (1868 - October 15, 1938)

A Garland (Pages 50 - 52) presents a life-sketch of the veena colossus, Dhanammal. Here is something more on her:

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Dark complexion; broad face; wide eyes; tobacco-dyed teeth; shrunken fingers that could draw out the soul of melody from the strings of the veena; no ornaments save black bangles. Nonchalant behaviour and care-free approach to one and all; expertise and repertoire! Her home, an abode of calm and peace save a rare whisper now and then and the sweet-strains of her voco-veena play. That gives an idea of the great lady.

Her *meetus* were superb and her singing would merge, blend and dissolve in the instrumental tone aesthetically. 'Give pressure to veena, it will weep', that was her measure of tenderness. Any genuine rasika could make her sing and play on veena. Was immensely resourceful in conviviality.

'Do you go to the Music Academy, Kanaka?'
'Yes, I had been. Why?'
'Nothing special. Heard that **they talk music** there! Just wanted to know!'

They were days of musicologist-titans. Dhanam's diatribe was on their deliberations!

Dharmapuri Subba Rayar gave his all - heart, soul and properties - to her and stayed in her house for several years. He composed the *javalis* - *Smarasundarangu (Paras)* and *Sakhiprāṇa (Chenjuruti)* for her. Elitists thronged her house to hear her veena play.

— Source: Kanakammal in *Kumari Malar* 40-1.

One of the stalwart vainikas of yester decades, Dhanammal sang as she played on veena. She had sung more than a thousand songs in six languages composed by as many as seventy poets, said R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar. After her death, the committee formed on May 17, 1939 to devise measures to perpetuate her fragrant memory suggested a music institution to be named after her. There was also a public meeting on November 3, 1938 at the Madras University presided over by Hon'ble C. Rajagopalachariar to pay homage to her.

'If one wishes to see the fullness of Carnatic music, it can be seen only in Veena Dhanammal. When she plays on veena, we get the impression of the Goddess of Music sitting and playing before us! How grand is her vocal music even though its sweetness has gone with her advancing age. How grand are her *gamakas!* What a strong timbre they have! If emotions could be brought out through music, it could be only in hers!'

— *Kalki* in 1933.

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TANJORE VAIDYANATHA AYYAR - MRIDANGAM MAESTRO: *Chutney* Episode:

The distinguished trail-blazer of the Tanjore *bani* (style) of percussive play, Tanjore Vaidyanatha Ayyar shaped the careers of the only two percussive Sangita Kalanidhis, viz., the unchallenged master, Palghat Mani and Dr. T.K. Murti. G. Ramanee from Buckinghamshire writes to *Sruti*:

> 'Vaitha Anna had a fantastic sense of humour. Adults roared with laughter at his witticism. Here is a specimen. A well-known musician had taken a vow never to talk during lunch or supper. At a dinner party, the lady unaware of this ascetic vow, as soon as he ate up his karunaikilañgu *togaiyal* (elephant yam chutney) saw to it that it was served again! The musician's second vow was not to waste what was served! So there had been repeats of solicitous serving of the same dish and the musician's gulping down the same helplessly to uphold vows. The acme of tolerance was reached and he burst out before his belly would. The good lady was told of his unfortunate predicament and thus ended the musician's romance with vows and extravaganza with *chutney!*'

A. KANYAKUMARI: REMINISCES: (b. June 5, 1961)

A. Kanyakumari (pages 106 - 107 *A Garland*) is among the top violinists popular in India and abroad with a massive programme to keep pace with. Calm, unassuming, unostentatious, she provides most satisfying accompaniment to make the principal's music more musical. Has uncanny anticipation, understanding and capability to adjust her bowing to suit the demands of the vocalist, saxophonist, mandolin artist, etc., plugging the inadequacies of Western instruments by providing *gamakas* and continuity. A born researcher. Reminiscing she said,

> "I used deliberately to walk past the house of M.L. Vasantakumari during my trips to and from my grandfather's gaping at her house in wondrous awe. One day, I entered her house. She heard me out and surprised me by giving me four concert dates... Even more unthinkable was a woman willing to promote another woman without questions asked. Accompanying her brought me fame."
>
> (I.E. 03.07.1994)

> "Six years' rigorous training with Ivatturi Vijayeswara Rao at Vizianagaram... He never expected any monetary returns for teaching music. He had such deep involvement in seeing his *sisyas* rise to the top..... Charumati Ramachandran's mother introduced me to Dr. M.L. Vasantakumari. In 1971 I was asked to accompany MLV (obviously to try my competence). She had privately asked her admirers and GNB fans to hear me and report to her on my abilities.

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They must have given a good chit to me. So from 1972 to her death in 1990, I was her accompanist.

I use a violin with in-built mike... I prefer the role of an accompanist as it is more challenging inspiring new lines of *manodharma*..."

—To SVK in the *Hindu*

KALLIDAIKURICHI RAMALINGA AYYAR - PHYSICAL CONTORTIONS:

'Brother of Vedanta Bhagavatar, there is none to equal Ramalinga Ayyar in *anga chēṣṭai* (peculiar physical contortions). He easily wins over even Tiger Varadachariar. His music concert could better be described as a great battle in *swaras*! He looks soft and innocent but once he begins, the *swaras* are belaboured ruthlessly... My idea in pointing out these is that Ayyar has not unfortunately understood the *jiva* of music; melody and *bhāva* are both casualties in his concert'.

— *Kalki*

On the same artiste, the renowned E. Krishna Ayyar wrote:

'I desired to hear his music after putting up a screen before him or tying both his hands in his back!'

BLIND BARDS:

DWARAM VENKATASWAMY NAIDU: (03.11.1893 - 25.11.1964)
A Delight To Children Too!

When the maestro came to All India Radio for a recording of a telugu programme for children, he spent sometime with children squatting amidst the entranced little ones explaining to them the structures of raga and tala in simple terms. Then he chose to play regaling them with the sounds of children crying, laughing and the soulful melodies of birds and farm noises in a rare display of improvisation.

— S.N. Sivaswamy in *Phoenix.*

B. Dr. Venkataswami Naidu, Sarabha Sastri, Panchakshari Gavai and such others have illumined the World of Melody. When Naidu was offered help to cure his blindness, he declined stating that he had found rhythm with not only music but also his inner *ātman. Jnāna Dṛṣṭi* they enjoyed and could easily dispense with the visual. A (tamil) *siddhar* (a realised soul) had sung:

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'Kaiyil muḍavanum, kaṇṇil kuruḍanum
Meyyil uṛaindiḍum Meyyinai kaṇḍidil
Meiyil iru kaṇgaḷum, Kaṇṇil iru kaigaḷum
Poyyilā Uṇmai pulappaḍal meyyē.'

(Armless handicapped and the blind, if they see and realise the Truth *(ātman)* within, they are sure to find two eyes in their souls and two hands in their lost eyes identifying Eternal Truth.)

One such *siddhar* cries out, *'Kaṇṇilā kuruḍan kaṇḍukiṭṭān'* meaning that the eyeless blind had seen the Truth!

C. Tamil film 'Ashokkumar' with melody-and-matinee-idol M.K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar was a musical super hit. Pradip Bhattachary I.A.S., wrote in the *Heritage* a summary of the legendary sanskrit work of the 1st Century A.D., *Ashokāvādana*. Relevant extracts here:

On the day Emperor Asoka consecrated the 84000 stupas, his Queen Padmavati gave birth to a charming son, Kunāla of bewitching eyes. Venerable Yashas advised the prince later to beware of his eyes as its fickleness would bring in sufferings! Queen Tishyarkshita, lured by his looks, makes amorous advances which Kunala does not encourage. Enraged, the Queen arranges to gouge out his eyes! The Prince finds the entire populace declining to do the horrid task save one. Kunala recalls the pregnant words of revered Yashas about the transcience of sight and tells the man:

"Do as ordered, for whether my eyes are gouged out or not, I have already grasped the essence of sight!"

One eye is plucked out and is placed in Kunala's hand and he addresses it:

"Why do you not see as before O lump of fashioned flesh? You are but a bubble; the wise do not chase after the suffering you cause!"

When the other eye is also plucked out, he says:

"I have become the son of the King of *Dharma*.
I have obtained the Kingship of *Dharma*, which ends all sorrow."

Sarabha, Naidu and their likes were votaries of this gorgeous belief and faith! Their melodious souls saw much more than what naked eyes are capable of !!

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THE WOMAN BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF MAN!

Ratnavali, spouse of ***Tulsidas,*** left for her parents' home once, only to see Tulsidas running closely after. The eminent woman chided him for his poor conduct and asked him whether he had no love for Rama and whether he could not spend sometime on the Lord. Stung to the quick, he realised his folly, spent time at Varanasi in devotion and austerity and brought out his immortal *Rama Caritamanas,* etc.

Jayadeva's marriage (12th century) with Padmavati was one of the finest of spiritual unions. He was proud to call himself Padmavati Ramana Jayadeva Kavi and what a great role she had played in his Song Celestial !

Siddhendra Yogi, the patron saint of Kuchipudi dance, was raised to enlightened spheres and heights by his noble wife, Kameswaramma.

Varadayya (later **Kṣetrajña**), 'Father of *Padams*', was drawn towards his co-student, Mohanangi, the devadasi at the temple. She wisely stipulated a condition for their union that he should compose *padams* in praise of the Lord. He struggled at first to do so but later initiated by a yogi, he did accomplish it. Mohanangi surrendered. But Kṣetrajña saw in Mohanangi the source of inspiration for his transformation and called her 'sister'!

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar said at his *Śatabhiṣēkam* celebrations at the Music Academy that the solicitude and care of his wife helped him to devote his entire time to music ensuring his prosperity.

Marulnikkīyār (later Tirunavukkarasar or Appar) owed his later life to his devoted sister, Tilakavati. Without that remarkable sister, the life of the boy would have been a desert and he would have probably been one of the unknown multitudes who die unsung. That was a case of a sister's profound love for a brother.

Parakalan (later Tirumangai Alwar) falls in passionate love with Kumudavalli. To qualify for her love, he changes even his sect! She lays down conditions which were beyond his capability. Ultimately, he is blest with divine grace and he becomes a noted Apostle of Visnu.

M. Chandrasekharan, the performing violin maestro and vocalist, lost not only his father but his vision too while yet a baby. Charubala Mohan, his mother, moulded him in such a manner that he owes his success and all to that musical, intuitive mother.

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The list is long. Well worth a study in depth!

Dr. VARADACHARI SADAGOPAN (USA) : A MUSICAL VENTURE:

Dr. Sadagopan hails from the Dakshina Tirupati, Oppiliappan Koil near Kumbakonam. Highly qualified including a Doctorate, he has published fifty technical papers on electronic materials and has six patents to his credit. He has published Sri Tyagaraja's *Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kritis* in tamil presenting the subtle special features and the universal appeal of the message of the *Ghana Panchakam* in the context of Vedic and Scriptural lore. He is to bring out the *Navavarana Kritis* of Muthuswami Dikshitar too.

Dr. N. RAMANATHAN — MUSICOLOGIST, VIOLINIST & PEDAGOGUE:

(b. May 21, 1946)

A Garland (page 237) gives an account of the amiable, scholar-musician, Dr. N. Ramanathan whose mild cultured exterior screens the musical affluence within. The learned Doctor has given solo violin concerts over All India Radio and as accompanist and soloist for sabhas, etc. Presently he is Professor and Head of the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras - perhaps the youngest to become so! He is associated with many institutions and projects on Music Research.

He has published quite a large number of articles and presented papers at seminars in India and abroad. His presentation is practical, specific and research-oriented. His lecture-demonstrations are lucid and enlightening. Was awarded the Fellowship of the Institute for Advanced Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA in 1991. His analysis of the rendition of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, G.N. Balasubramaniam and some other maestros on *lakshana/ lakshya* aspects has been revealing and instructive.

The learned Doctor is a keen votary of precision and accuracy as much in the usage of musical terminology as in the presentation of ragas, etc. His knowledge of ancient works on musicology is quite deep. His lectures are supplemented by demonstration of excerpts of renderings through cassettes to ensure that the points are appreciated and assimilated. The excerpts from his review of a book would make his approach to men and music clear:

> 'The writings of Prof. P. Sambamurty on South Indian art music have influenced perspectives. Students, etc. take his writings as the starting point and rarely familiarise themselves with the writings of earlier scholars. Some of the fundamental and basic concepts dealt with in his books, which lack the correct perspective, have given rise

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to wrong notions. When others follow Sambamurty and continue to echo the same thoughts, (the damage caused could be understood).'

P.N. SESHAGIRI BHAGAVATAR — *KĀLAKṢĒPA* ARTISTE:

(20th Cent.)

It was the period of ascendancy of *kālakṣēpams* commencing from Ananta Padmanabha Goswami of Thanjavur, Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar (1841-1903) and Adibhatla Narayana Das (1864-1945). There was a flourishing crop of eminence in the field and people thronged in thousands to uplift themselves spiritually attending *kālakṣēpams* hearing catchy stories, gripping music and learning dharma and morality effortlessly. With the onslaught of films and television, *kālakṣēpam* is almost a lost art now.

Seshagiri Bhagavatar was a noted exponent with a ringing musical voice. His music was rich in *bhavas* with *sruti-suddham* and musicians used to attend his *kālakṣēpams.* We have heard that Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar declined to sing at Triplicane when he learnt that tickets were being issued. Bhagavatar too did not relish collections by sending round the hundi-boxes. He attracted large crowds during the middle decades of this century. (Full details are not available.)

S.V. SUBBIAH BHAGAVATAR - VOCALIST & DRAMATIST: (20th Century)

Subbiah Bhagavatar was a contemporary of S.G. Kittappah, K.B. Sundarambal and other stage titans, who were all blest with a golden voice. People thronged their dramas to hear their captivating songs, rich in conjuring tone traversing the three octaves with rare timbre, felicity and sweetness.

Gramaphone discs of his are still available like—

Kārtikēya Gāngēya Gouri tanayā	—	*Todi*
Śrīñgāra Lahari	—	*Nilambari*
Pūñgāvinodamē, etc.	—	*Khamas*

M.K. TYAGARAJA BHAGAVATAR - VOCALIST & FILM STAR :

(20th Century)

Bhagavatar pioneered a revolution in tamil film music. It was a dynamic change from the absolutely serene Classical Carnatic songs in concert style to

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the exhilarative neo-classical Carnatic music but quite conforming to all *lakshanas*. He was the rage of his days; enjoyed a divine, captivating, sweet voice. Wherever he went, he was mobbed by genuine admirers.

Tyagaraja Bhagavatar was a disciple of the renowned Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar, father of Alathur Sivasubramania Ayyar, one of the distinguished Alathur Brothers. Bhagavatar has given concerts too. Classicism mellowed but persisted in him, to the full gaze of *lakshanas,* to meet the demands of films. People flocked to his films to hear his mesmerizing tone.

Unfortunately, the mild-natured musical stalwart, got involved in the sensational Lakshmikantam Murder Case in which N.S. Krishnan, the famous comedian of repute, also figured. The vast empire of admirers which Bhagavatar commanded melted away and he was tragically and conveniently forgotten! That was the measure of popular appeal and acclaim!

Drama and films brought out remarkable singers with alluring golden voices like T.R. Mahalingam, C.V.V. Pantulu, Serukalathur Sama, P.U. Chinnapppa, etc. Films vied with each other in advertising 'fifty' 'sixty' songs and it was all musical feasts. Heros and heroines conversed in classical songs! Music was the staple of the crazy populace! Where has it all gone? Is it a case for *Sahana* or *Mukhari*?

A.N. Sapthagirisan of Jalgaon, a flautist himself, desires that such eminent singers should all be brought to the *Garlands*. A genuine suggestion from one who had drunk deep the exhilarating stage songs of those memorable days which the youth of the present has unfortunately been deprived of. Madurai G.S.Mani demonstrates how such film-music is all worthy of being sung at concerts. But few could recapture the grandeur of stage music of the past.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: (1861 - 1941)

a. Achira: '... So I have no fear of stealing your ideas and putting my own stamp on them!'

Navin : Stealing is a great art, whether in the realm of knowledge or of the state - the great emperors were all great pirates. **It is only the petty thief who gets caught before he can put his stamp on the stolen stamps.'**

— In *The Last Word.*

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How true! Style of rendition is imitated with approbation and it is good for art. The tune - mode of rendition is borrowed normally by distinguished composers even and it is unavoidable sometimes. Several composers sometimes adopt the same signature like 'Padmanabha' leading to confusion at later periods regarding the composer. But that is innocent. Out of sheer innocent delight in imitating the mode of composition as well as the delight in using the same signature - not out of base considerations but merely to enjoy the joke - some indulge in such endeavours.

Two of the 'Three Musical Musketeers of Kaladipet' - Tiger Varadachariar, vocal maestro and K.V.Srinivasa Ayyangar, eminent musicologist - both purists to the core jointly composed the song *Nidu Caranamule (Simhendramadhyamam)* with the signature of the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru, whom they revered; and when they later repented their action, very strangely under the same *mudra,* as expiation they composed *Nata Jana Paripālaka,* as if two wrongs nullify each other!

b. Tagore lost his vocal chord. Rathidranath Tagore, his son, writes:

> 'His extremely handsome appearance coupled with a remarkable voice probably partly accounted for his popularity. But he had to pay dearly for it.
>
> The hall was crowded and father's lecture was long. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee presided. When he had finished, the audience clamoured for a song. Father felt he could not do it. But when Bankim Babu also joined in the request, he could not very well refuse.
>
> **He sang as only he could filling the hall with his powerful but melodious voice. But he had overstrained himself and his vocal chord became damaged...**
>
> **His voice was never the same again!'**
>
> — In 'Father as I knew him' *The Heritage.*

Rabindra Sangeet is the craze of Bengalis.

Dr. SEMMANGUDI SRINIVASA AYYAR — UNIQUE STALWART : (b. July 25, 1908)

Few artistes have had the measure of divine blessing, opportunity, capability and span of performing life to reach the top and stay there unruffled and unchallenged as Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar is blest with. None can dispute the unique credit which is worthy of finding a place in the *Guinness Book of Records. Vide A Garland* (Pages 312-316).

In 1926 he made his debut at Sri Nageswarar temple, Kumbakonam amidst pouring rains and he used to describe his experience with flavoured humour. In

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1996, he gives, on request and friendly persuasion and pressure, concerts though not too frequently to crowded halls of enthusiastic admirers who long and throng to hear the 'Old Bhiṣma Pitāmaha of Music'. And they return regaled with his music in full satisfaction! Seventy years' of active performing life and at the top still! He has also to be the Chief Guest at numerous functions. Says he:

> 'There is nothing like hearing the original voice of a musician.
> It confers a rare *soukhyam* which could not be got through mike.'
>
> 'The old styles of teaching helped to bring forth titans; but it is not feasible now even to think of following such methods either by teachers or the taught.'
>
> 'Several masters did not like to have their music recorded in discs. Sometimes what is highly pleasing once may, after lapse of time, appear ordinary. Those masters desired the admiration to linger in the hearts of rasikas and not in gramaphone discs, etc.'
>
> 'Present day musicians have vast resources, scope, opportunity and returns. Many of them render excellently. They should endeavour to ensure that their music lingers in the hearts of rasikas even long after their concerts.'
>
> 'I do receive numerous offers from USA, etc. While young, I was to go to Sri Lanka for a concert. My father told me that Bharat was such a vast country and that it should be sufficient to display one's *vidwat.* I adhere to his advice as *Pitṛu vākya paripālaka*!'

No wonder the Carnatic Music Association of North America had to cross the seas to confer its august title on the Doctor at Madras. That is itself a distinct record in the history of music. *'Tiṛai kaḍal oḍiyum tiraviyam tēḍu',* is the tamil adage meaning even by crossing the seas, earn wealth. In his case, it should read, *'Tiṛai kaḍal ōḍi varum tiraviyamum paṭṭayamum aḍai'* meaning 'Accept the treasures and titles that come rushing across the ocean!'

SADGURU CHARAN & PANCHAMUKHI:

In *A Garland* (page 162), it has been mentioned that Sembanarkoil Vaidyanathan (grandson of the nagaswara maestro Sembanarkoil Ramaswamy) has performed the difficult *Aṣṭāvadhānam.* Now comes from Visakhapatnam (AP), Sadguru Charan who successfully demonstrates the *Panchamukhi* by providing rhythmic accompaniment. In this system, the two feet, two palms and shoulders are used to denote the different *gatis*—

Left foot keeps *tisra gati*
Right foot keeps *sañkiṛṇa*
Left hand keeps *misra gati*
Right hand keeps *chatusra gati* and

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Shoulders maintain *khanda* simultaneously.

At the 26th Annual Conference in 1976 of the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat, this demonstration was given with five percussionists seated around him to check the *kālapramāṇa.*

— Sulochana Saralaya in *Sruti*

ROYAL RECEPTION : YET ANOTHER! VINA SESHANNA:

'Under the heading 'A Royal Reception' (*Yet Another Garland* - page 372) you have mentioned the unique honours conferred on Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer. Now I shall provide one more instance!

In 1911, Maharaja Sayyaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda invited Vina Seshanna for performances at his palace. He stayed there for a week, gave three performances at the palace before the Maharaja, Royal family, Ustads and Pandits and connoisseurs. At the end of the week, Sayaji Rao invited Seshanna to the palace and sent him back to his lodgings seated in a palanquin with his vina in a procession with bodyguards, etc. presenting him the palanquin and other paraphernalia too. On return to Mysore, he was taken in the same palanquin in procession to his home.'

— B.V.K. Sastri, the veteran musicologist.

TIRUVAIYARU R. RAMAMURTI AYYAR - MUSICIAN: (b. December 29, 1913)

Parents	:	R. Rajagopala Bhagavatar & Suganda Kuntalambal
Musical training	:	under his father initially Nallur Bharatam Narayanaswami Ayyar (one year) Palamaneri Swaminatha Ayyar, disciple of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar.

Ramamurti Ayyar was running a music school at Thanjavur for about ten years and later was school teacher for music from 1942 to 1970. He initiated his sons and daughters too in music.

His father and he belonged to the Tillaisthanam *Śiṣya Parampara,* which has been performing the *adhiṣṭana pūja, abhiṣēkam and ārādhana* at the *samadhi* of Sri Tyagaraja at Tiruvaiyaru. As there was some dispute on the exercise of the right, Ramamurti Ayyar field a suit and got a decree in his favour. Born in a musical family and brought up in musical environments from childhood, Ramamurti Ayyar remained a staunch devotee of Tyagaraja and

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enjoyed the privilege of performing the religious side of the celebrations upto 1994.

TIRUKKODIKAVAL KRISHNA AYYAR - VIOLIN TITAN: (1857-1913)

Venue : Pudukottai Maharajah's College
Occasion : Birth-day celebrations of the Maharajah
Concert by : Krishna Ayyar with Dakshinamurti Pillai on mridangam.

Dakshinamurti Pillai did not arrive on time. Ayyar took up his violin and commenced the concert. A true titan he was, he sat solo and played solo!

He gave vocal rendition simultaneously for *pallavi* in *Sankarabharana* with *Mahimateliya tarama* nonchalantly to the delirious delight of the rasikas. 'Self-confidence, self-reverence and self-knowledge lead to sovereign power indeed!'

—Source: Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar.

At Tirukkodikaval itself, Bhagavatar gave a kālakṣēpam. It went on till midnight and when food was taken it was 2 a.m. Krishna Ayyar invited Bhagavatar to his house and gave a thrilling exhibition of violin play to entertain Bhagavatar! *Night did not wither his spirits nor day-long work exhaust his inspired passion for music! Vide* pages 118-120 of *A Garland* for further details.

THANJAVUR NARAYANASWAMI APPA - MRIDANGAM MAESTRO:

'The main reason for his mastery was his *sangita jnana;* he was a *lakshya* vidwan. Delighted rasikas by combining *meetu chapu* and *toppi nada* delectably. He would not move his body or limbs at concerts and what came from the instrument was titillāting *nāda.* **If musicians changed their *sruti* on the concert stage, he would not adjust his mridanga *sruti* on any account,** since he would not do that job reserved by him for those detailed for it. When I requested him to increase the *sruti* a little, he declined! I had to sing to the *sruti* of his mridangam! Justice (Subra)Mani Ayyar kept him at his residence for Appa's eye operation and that was the standard of his image.' *Vide* pages 185-6 of A *Garland* too.

—Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar

RARE GESTURE OF MAHA VAIDYANATHA AYYAR: (1844 - 1893)

A Garland (pages 385-390) presents the life-sketch of that glittering titan of all times, Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar. It has been mentioned that he cancelled the

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concert when he came to know that money was being collected for it. He announced that there would be free performances on three days and that all could come. Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar on violin and Tukkaram Rao on mridangam gave splendid support. There were voluntary contributions to the tune of Rs.750 on the last day (now equivalent to Rs.75,000). The eminent vidwan gave Rs.350 out of it to Sri Parthasarathi temple itself for performing special services to the Lord!

And when the original organiser desired that his good intentions should be taken note of and a concert given again, Vaidyanatha Ayyar readily agreed and gave one more!

— Source: V.S. Gomati Sankara Ayyar

T. CHOWDIAH - VIOLIN VIRTUOSO: (1895 - 1967)

A Garland (pages 41-44) provides a clear account of the life of T. Chowdiah. Here are some remarks on the great virtuoso by V. Doreswamy Iyengar:

> 'It was my privilege to give a number of concerts with T. Chowdiah, though he was much senior to me in every respect. **The combination gave me a big boost .** I think that this was the first veena-violin combination.
>
> Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar gave a memorable rendering of *Evarikai (Devamanohari).* Chowdiah bowed to the maestro and said, "It looks as if Tyagaraja had composed this song only for you. I pray that you keep singing like this for a hundred years."
>
> Spontaneously Ariyakudi replied, "Yes, I shall do it provided you accompany me for as many years!"

Chowdiah's *guru bhakti* matched Ekalavya's and there are few vidwans who could match his. To increase the volume of the violin, he improvised the seven-stringed one which was hotly objected to by many a vidwan and institution. He dared not publicise it without his guru's nod. Doreswamy Iyengar narrates how he got that nod:

> 'One evening Krishnappa was to sing at Veena Seshanna's house. Chowdiah was to accompany. Towards the end, he hesitantly took out the seven-stringed violin. This invited a fierce look from Krishnappa. Chowdiah nervously told him that he wanted to try it out. Krishnappa said, "Are not four strings enough for you to spoil the violin?"

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Seshanna intervened and asked Krishnappa to give Chowdiah a chance to experiment. The concert was a tremendous success. Seshanna asked Krishnappa to allow Chowdiah to play on his new violin...and **he rose to the top.'**

He played for a special audience including Mahatma Gandhiji. Gandhiji sat enraptured. At the end, Mahatmaji was asked,

'What do you think of the recital?

'He is a great violinist; and
I am a simple non-violinist', replied Gandhiji.

Chowdiah wanted to die in harness and he died so on January 19, 1967 having performed on the previous day!

Chowdiah Memorial Hall in the shape of violin at Bangalore is a standing massive monument to him. The first building in the shape of a musical instrument, it is air-conditioned.

The Three Vivid *Laya* Images:

i. The *tani avartanam* (solo) at the concert of M.S. Subbulakshmi at the United Nations. The lay audience comprising the world's statesmen gave young ghatam vidwan Vinayakram (Vikku) a round of applause even before veteran mridangist Dr. T.K. Murti got it!

ii. For the first time in Bombay in 1949, Palghat Mani and Palani Subramanya Pillai (kanjira) accompanying veteran G.N. Balasubramaniam presented a fiercely-fought percussion battle *(tani avartanam)* spanning forty-five minutes sending the audience into delirious raptures.

iii. In the fifties at the Shanmukhananda Building Fund Festival when Alathur Brothers gave a concert, a fast - rippling, tuneful *'faran'* by Kodandarama Ayyar on ghatam got the applause first to the surprise and even discomfiture of Mani Ayyar on mridangam.

— K.S. Mahadevan at Talavadya Seminar, Bangalore

Ghatam attracts special attention because of its unique, rare shape and odd appearance on concert dais and does extract an element of special consideration too from rasikas seeing the artiste moving earth and heavens to extract or draw out the best tonal and percussive effects.

KANJIRA:

At the Experts' Committee meeting of the XXXI Conference of the Music Academy, Madras on December 22, 1957, Palani Subramania Pillai appealed

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for the inclusion of kanjira as an instrument for concerts. T.V Subba Rao explained that inclusion of many accompaniments reduces the emphasis on music as such and that kanjira could not also blend with *sruti*. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar said that kanjira as played by distinguished vidwans could be considered for inclusion. Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar concurred with him. Swaminatha Pillai, son of Dakshinamurti Pillai of Pudukottai gave a demonstration of how to play on kanjira on 26.12.1957.

MORSING (MORCHING, MORSANGU, MUKHASANKA):

Adichapuram Sitarama Ayyar is reputed to have brought morsing to concerts. He had accompanied Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Naina Pillai and other stalwarts.

'The youth of Israel used the instrument at nights in the 19th century to attract young girls with obvious results. The Government banned its use', writes L. Bhimachar, veteran artiste.

GETTU VĀDYAM (JHALLARI): AVUDAYARKOIL HARIHARA BHAGAVATAR:

'Jhallari Vādya Supriyaya namaḥ' - Sri Subramanya Sahasranamam

'Jhalli, maddala, jhārjhara vādya nāda muditē' - in Akhilandeswari kriti of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

The Rajas of Ramanathapuram donated a village for service with gettu vadyam at Sri Atmanatha Swami temple, Avudayarkoil, now in Pudukottai district. In the inner *prakaram* (corridor), only this instrument is played.

Sri Harihara Bhagavatar (vide page 87 of *A Garland*) (1895 - 1975) was a renowned player on gettu vadyam; he had accompanied on it stalwarts like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, Chittoor Subramania Pillai in concerts and has given demonstrations.

Thethagudi Harihara Sarma, father of T.H. Vinayakaram, used to play on gettu vadyam. Avudayarkoil Sitarama Bhagavatar, son of Harihara Bhagavatar and his brother, H. Subramanyam play this stringed percussive instrument.

The instrument continues to be a family possession for want of others learning it! Bangalore K. Venkataram is perhaps the only other player on the instrument.

Source: Avudayarkoil H. Subramanyam at Talavadya Seminar 1996.

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A RARE TREAT from TITTE KRISHNA IYENGAR:

'It was sweet music from a different person from a different era! Ragas came in cascades with all their finer, delicate nuances either forgotten or are being rapidly erased with regrettable efficiency. With a voice and a voice-culture that could be the envy of a person a third his age, Titte Krishna Iyengar of Mysore (b. November 24, 1902) delighted the gathering at the Music Academy, Madras on December 29, 1995 with unhurried music, soulful and soothing on the nerves.'

— The *Hindu* January 5, 1996

HARIDASAS OF KARNATAKA: DEVARANAMAS:

Purandaradasa's songs with notation were first brought out by M. Lalitangi, a famed devotee of Dāsa, in 1955 in Tamil.

'During the Vijayanagar period, the Dasakuta began to flourish. The Haridasas belong to the holy lineage of wandering mendicant ascetics. The *bhakti* movement in Karnataka was essentially a Madhva movement. They were firm believers of *Nāma Sañkīrtana* and their songs run to thousands. Starting with Narahari Tirtha (13th century) to Jagannathadasa (18th century), they have contributed substantially to music. Very little is known of Purandara's association with music and its development. Much of the music of his songs is lost and we are left only with the skeletons of word-structures. **The reason is he has been revered more as a saint than as a composer.** Nearly thirty songs contain references to music, musical instruments, musicians' qualifications and ragas. There is no traceable lineage of disciples or notational scripts.

'The kirtanas are set in tunes easy to sing, generally within a single octave without undue *sangati* embellishments and the *pallavis* are such as to enable chorus singing.

'After Purandara Dasa, Kanakadasa (16th century) shines like Vidura of the Mahabharata. *Mohana Tarangini, Hari Bhakti Sara* and *Nala Caritre* are among his works. Kanaka Mundige is the type of his compositions. His signature is Adikeshava. His compositions are full of abstract imagery, subtlety of metaphysics and inscrutable implications.

'Vijaya Dasa (1687 - 1765), a native of Chikalaparavi in Raichur district is famous for his *suladis.* Dr. M.V. Krishna Rao observes:

> "So sublime is the spiritual content and so elegant and graceful is the expression that among the Haridasas, Purandara and Vijayadasa stand prominent."

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'Jagannatha Dasa (1726 - 1809) composed many. His *Harikathāmṛtasāra* is a mine of information.'

— R.K. Srikantan in *Phoenix*

MYSORE Dr. V. DORESWAMY IYENGAR — RENOWNED VAINIKA: (b. 1920)

The veteran vainika, Dr. Doreswamy Iyengar states that *bani* (style or *gharana*) is more pronounced on veena, there being the Thanjavur, Andhra and Mysore *banis,* that the Mysore *bani* existed in its purest form till about 1950, Vainika Pravina Venkatagiriappa, Bhairavi Lakshminaranappa and Veena Shivaramiah zealously guarding its character and form and that the present Mysore bani is more vocal oriented. Since the days of Veena Venkatasubbiah (19th century), the Mysore *bani* has been in vogue, reaching the acme of perfection under Vainika Sikhamani Seshanna who viewed that the scope of veena would be constricted if confined purely to vocal style alone. Veena Bakshi Subbanna adopted the vocal style as he was a disciple of Mysore Sadasiva Rao. Iyengar views that, in present context, it is better for each *bani* to take some salient points from the other to enrich itself.

The veteran had his training for ten years under the genial Venkatagiriappa who taught him the notations of Western music also. Iyengar had attended mridangam classes also. He **does not believe in contact-mike** as he firmly views that the melodic sound of veena in its true tone and the fine, delicate, subtle and spiritual nuances of Carnatic music are harmed by it as it takes away the charm, delicacy, fineness and characteristic finish.

Dr. Doreswamy Iyengar is a dedicated exponent still having his assiduous daily practice and is a personification of grace and culture. S.N. Chandrasekhar hails him as **'an epitome of Karnataka Culture.'**

When Iyengar made his debut before the Maharaja of Mysore at the age of twelve, he was the youngest vainika giving a concert. The pleased ruler presenting Rs. fifty (now worth Rs.5000) said:

> 'Do not expose him now. He would lose his sense of mental equipoise. Wait till he completes his learning'.

As and when child prodigies are presented, such a valid advice is tendered but is rarely accepted owing to the lure of income and the glamour of publicity.

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The learned Doctor has performed *jugalbandis* with stalwarts like Chowdiah, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Ali Akhbar Khan (sarod), Halim Jaffer Khan (sitar) and Balamurali Krishna (viola).

Apart from the honours indicated already in *A Garland* (pages 53-54), the following have come up to him:

Sangita Kala Ratna from Gayana Samaja, Bangalore
Sangita Kala Sikhamani from Indian Arts Society, Madras.

NAMAGIRIPETTAI KRISHNAN vs. ARUPPUKOTTAI GANESAN:

Krishnan was under-study with Ganesan for four years. The guru will teach him in fits and starts according to his whims and fancies. Both played at the kumbhabishekam of Sri Naganatha Swami temple at Nayinarkoil. When they played raga *Mohanam,* they had to stop for a while for chanting of *agama mantras.* When Krishnan was asked to resume, he took up *Mohanam* where it was left. The guru gave him a swift prick with the shivali (nagaswara's mouth-piece) and blood oozed out. Krishnan continued as if unconcerned. Why should he be inflicted with that punishment?

"You fool, you had already covered *Mohanam;*
why resume and repeat it without change?"

'My guru thought so and the prick conveyed it', said Krishnan in December 1984 - four years later!

Experiences of Chowdiah, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Madurai Somasundaram, Vasudevacharya, etc. would be revealing. 'If I commit a mistake in singing', says Madurai Somu, 'I would be beaten'.

PALGHAT MANI — MRIDANGA WIZARD:

(June 12, 1912 - May 29, 1981)

A Garland (pages 152-4) carries a full description of the advent and adventure of Palghat Mani, the first without a second in percussion. Here is a tribute from Dr. Sulochana Rajendran, Editor, *Shanmukha* of Bombay:

"Ariyakudi - Mani Iyer, Alathur Brothers - Mani Iyer, Musiri - Mani Iyer, GNB - Mani Iyer combines are some of the teams which could never be erased from one's memory. If he maintained a vigorous style with Chembai, he dovetailed into the melodic flow of Ariyakudi while he sustained the slow tempo of Musiri with fine resonance. His uncanny anticipation of Semmangudi enthralled one and all. He could easily

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> reproduce the melodic flourishes of GNB in the same speed as the vocalist had handled them, while he equally meandered along the melody line of Mali, dotted with pauses. The complex variations of the dueting Brothers of Alathur were a child's play to him. Thus he practised what he preached attuning to *each bani* and elevating the quality of the concert as a whole."

It is really an issue for deep introspection how titans of the past like Mani have carved out an indelible niche in the melodic remembrances of rasikas which live on and on. 'Mani' was always 'Mani' only as wall-posters used to testify and announce like:

Ariyakudi - Rajamanickam - Mani
Musiri - Chowdiah - Mani
Chembai - Chowdiah - Mani
Semmangudi - Rajamanickam - Mani etc.

If, by chance, it announced Palghat Mani Ayyar, it used to give cause for doubt about 'which Mani' since 'Mani' signified only one in music parlance like Kalidasa or Valmiki or Nehru or Rajaji. Who is this Mani Ayyar who has dropped from heavens today, one used to wonder. There was only one percussive priest in Carnatic fold of the name of Mani!

The relationship between Mani and Ariyakudi or Mali or Chittoor Subramania Pillai or Dakshinamurti Pillai, etc., deserve a thesis for a doctorate. That will be a chapter on how laya coalesces or revolts!

* * *

Dr. M.S. SUBBULAKSHMI, THE MELODY QUEEN:

(b. September 16, 1916)

'Gandhiji heard the music of Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi (who had already commenced her conquests in the world of melody) at Sevagram in 1941. Manu Gandhi recorded:

> 'In the prayer Bapuji commended Subbulakshmi Ben for the sweetness of her voice and said, " She loses herself in *bhajan*. During prayer one must lose oneself in God. To sing a *bhajan* is one thing; to sing it by losing oneself in God is quite different!"

'On October 1st, 1947, All India Radio told us that Bapu was keen to hear *Hari thuma haro, a Meera Bhajan.* As she had not then learnt that song yet, All India Radio was informed so. The same evening, we had another message that Bapu would prefer to hear *Hari thuma haro* **spoken by Subbulakshmi than sung by others!** We went to All India Radio studios and

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had the piece set to tune with the help of others. It was long past midnight when it was recorded and it was taken to New Delhi on 2nd October, 1947.

> "Little did we imagine that the *bhajan* sung for his birthday was going to be played by All India Radio all over the country less than four months later on January 30, 1948, when the sombre news of his assassination was followed by that song sung by her. Subbulakshmi swooned on hearing it!"
>
> — T. Sadasivam

'Behind the success of many a woman, there is a man', shall be the diction more relevant here. T. Sadasivam married her in 1940 and was her friend, philosopher, guide and promoter. If she was a musical jewel, he was the successful jeweller. They provide a good, gracious, model couple to emulate. Gandhiji preferred the spoken word of the melody queen to the musical version of others! Was he won over by her enchanting bewitching voice or by the spiritual and soulful rendition which invested it with grace, colour and life?

It was the latter. He was not the man to be swayed by the sweetness of the voice alone. Here is a version of the eminent writer Pothan Joseph which confirms it:

> "As for the poetic touch in the pattern of diction, Mahatma Gandhi was indifferent. Though he contributed to community singing before his prayer-speeches, he could not be classed among those whose spirit was exalted by music as an art; the phrase "wake to ecstasy the living lyre" must, I think, have hardly any meaning though Timotheus had made an audience before Alexander nearly mad by his recitals on the stringed instrument."

"***1931 August - Soundarya Mahal, Madras:*** A lean girl was singing. Her melodic voice captivated me. 'She sings well', I told my friend.

1953 January 25 - Marriage at the residence of T.M.S. Mani:

> 'She was singing well before. There is some change now', said C.Rajagopalachari (Rajaji).

I felt it was good and found that there was the stamp of maturity. I told Rajaji,

> 'What you say is not correct. Only now, I feel her music has attained perfection and I hear *sampradaya* music (born of her then training under Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar).'

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My friend told me:

'Enadhi sisters were famous. The elder enjoyed a wonderful voice. But M.S.S. has surpassed hers.'

"The precious character of M.S. Subbulakshmi is to imbibe with *bhakti* what is best in the music of elders, to practise intensely and assimilate the *bhavas* (emotions) of the *sahitya* and *sangita* with a will to promote the intellectual standard of her rendition. Mere voice does not confer *vidwat*."

— T.T. Krishnamachari in *Ananda Vikatan* dated December 22, 1968.

AKALANKA/GOVINDA/GOVINDACHARYA — UNRESOLVED RIDDLE!

(c. 18th Century)

Venkatamakhin or Venkateswara Dikshitar brought out the epoch-making work, *Caturdaṇḍi Prakāśika* (An Exposition or Illumination of the four Channels through which Raga manifests itself) in 1635 or 1660 A.D. A landmark presentation in the annals of Classical Carnatic music, nay, of all musical systems, it provides a systematic, scientific classification of *melas* or basic or principal ragas. A part of the ninth and the entire tenth chapter are unavailable. Twelve hundred and odd couplets in simple, elegant sanskrit present the *mela-janaka* and *janya* raga scheme. *A Garland* (pages 411-3) presents a life-sketch of this Prince of Musicologists.

But Venkatamakhin who laid down the code failed to ensure that all the 72 melakarta ragas have all the swaras both in the *arohana* and in the *avarohana* which resulted in many *janyas* creeping in as *melakarta* ragas. The idea behind the scheme is original and impressive but in drafting the scheme lacunae had crept in. It is an inspired work. 'The *Prakāśika* is to Carnatic music what Panini's *Aṣṭādhyāyi* is to sanskrit language.'

Who was Akalanka?

Akalanka's melakartas are full in the *arohana* and in the *avarohana* and thus satisfy the norm of a *melakarta* raga. Govinda or Govindacharya or Govindaraya who authored the work *Sangita Sāstra Samkṣēpa* or *Sangita Cūdāmani*, was a madhwa who lived in Kakavattaram in Thanjavur district. While bringing out the scheme, Govinda follows studied silence about earlier authorities. Whether the Scheme of Venkatamakhin was known to him or not would remain unanswered

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perhaps. Govinda would like his work to be an inspired work. As aptly observed by the Editor of *Sangraha Cūḍāmaṇi,*

> 'Govinda seems to raise the work to the rank of a Purana as an episode of *Skanda Purana.* He studiously avoids references to all writers on music barring Sarngadeva forgetting that Bharata and Sarngadeva would not be transported to Puranic antiquity.'

Who was Akalanka? Was there a musicologist of the name? Or, is it just an honorific like Niśśanka to Sarngadeva or Bhiṣma Pitamaha to Purandara Dasa? Do Akalanka, Govinda and Govindacharya refer to one and the same author or was Akalanka guru to Govinda? Questions galore present themselves.

Caturdaṇḍi v. Cūḍāmaṇi:

Venkatamakhin belonged to a family of distinguished scholars connected with the Court. *Caturdaṇḍi* would seem to have languished in the family lofts of his successors till Muddu Venkatamakhi brought it to public gaze long after. Contrary to this Govinda's work would seem to have gained immediate circulation and currency.

T.S. Parthasarathy opines that Tyagaraja himself should have had a copy of it as prominently indicated by the bard using many of the raga nomenclatures, raga swarupas of *apūrva* (rare) and *apprasiddha* (not in popular use) ragas with immaculate grace, felicity and accuracy which accord well with the contents in *Cūḍāmani.* He is tempted to wonder whether the work *Swararnava* which was reportedly presented to the bard by Sage Narada could be this *Sangraha Cudamani* itself! There is rich field for musicologists to ponder over.

GHANAM KRISHNA AYYAR — VOCALIST & COMPOSER:

(1790 - 1854)

Hailed as the Tamil Kṣētrajna for his *padams* of exquisite charm like *Vēlavarē (Bhairavi), Pāreṅgum Pārfāl (Kalyani)* and *Teruvil varāno* (Khamboji), Ghanam Krishna Ayyar's was a life of fond friendship, tilting music and dedication to the art. *A Garland* (pages 116-117) gives an account of his life and contribution.

The song *Endaro Mahanubhavulu (Sri)* is stated to have been sung by the disciples of Tyagaraja when Govinda Marar came from Trivandrum. *Sabhāpatiku Vēru Deivam (Abhogi)* was sung by Gopala Krishna Bharati when requested by Tyagaraja. Such an incident occurred in Ayyar's life too.

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Ghanam Krishna Ayyar went and paid his respects to the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru when the disciples of the saint, Kamarasavalli Nannu Ayyar and Tillaistanam Rama Ayyangar, were singing his songs, *Ē pāpamu jēsitira, Rāma nī (Atana).* The saint asked the Ghana Vidwan to sing knowing his vidwat and popularity. Krishna Ayyar took up the pallavi of the same song, elaborately delineated the raga and sang it. When Tyagaraja asked him to sing a song of his own, Ayyar in *Atana* raga itself sang the song *Śummā śummā varugumā sukham* with delectable *sangatis* and *kalpana swaras* to the delight of Tyagaraja. Later Ayyar completed the song in praise of Sri Sundararaja Perumal.

Gopala Krishna Bharati was among the disciples of Ghanam Krishna Ayyar.

— Source Dr.U.Ve.Swaminatha Ayyar

* * * *

TANJORE (KOMAL) S. KALYANARAMAN — VOCALIST:

(June 2, 1930 - Jany 9, 1994)

Vide *A Garland* (pages 101-2) for details on his life. Kalyanaraman's enormous knowledge of *raga* and *laya* enabled him to indent on *sruti bheda* techniques. He enjoyed a vast circle of admirers and one of whom, D.N. Viswesvariah, brings forth the depth of his sorrow on the demise of Kalyanaraman when he writes in *Sangeetham:*

> 'His music was not only entertaining but educative. Never had I felt the **loss of music** since GNB's passing as now. We truly have lost a treasure-house.'

He does not stop with this which might even be wrongly taken as handsome obituary notes but the pathos of his passion for the music of the Komal maestro comes when he says:

> 'I wish that Kalyanaraman had lived at least as long as this admirer.'

S. Moni, I.A.S. (Retd.), a keen admirer of Kalyanaraman, said very much like this. Here is a report on his concert on December 22, 1968 at Sangita Vidwat Sabha:

> 'Kalyanaraman was developing his rendition step by step beautifully. *Shanmukhapriya alapana* was mesmerising studded with magical exploration as if clusters of stars were coming down with a flash. The fulness of the raga was melodically brought out with cascading *brikas*...His immense *jnana* and expertise shone with grace even when he sang a piece briefly.'

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SYAMA SASTRI — TALAPRASTARA: (1762 - 1827)

'Compositions of Syama Sastri are marvels of *swara-varna-samyoga;* their melodic forms are strikingly original, unconventional and free. His *varna-mettus* have a daring grandeur of conception presenting delightfully fresh phases of raga as rich in emotional spirit as in the haunting beauty of their modes.'

— T.V. Subba Rao

'Sastrigal's pieces have considerable rhythmic power and finesse, probably deliberately since he could not match the lyricism of Tyagaraja or the intellectualism of Dikshitar. It is no accident that Shakespeare was the master of blank verse nor that Sastry made such consummate use of *chapu tala.* Geniuses know precisely where their strength lies.... The tri-syllable 'O-O-O' in *O Jagadamba (Ananda* Bhairavi) has an anguish of its own comparable to the 'Never, Never, Never' that Shakespeare puts in the mouth of King Lear.'

— K.S. Mahadevan

The great composer had exemplary fascination for the eyes of Sri Devi and frequently resumes references to them in many of his songs. *Karuṇā Kaṭākṣam* of Devi he sought for and, in all probability, secured too. Of the Trinity, he was the one who was above wants in material terms.

Syama and Krishna mean the same. Yet he adopted Syamakrishna as *mudra* for his songs fascinated by the double references to Krishna.

He had great regard and love for his sister who gave up her life when he died. '*Syama Krishna Sahodari*', the term occurring in his song, perhaps has relevance to her too.

— Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao

LALGUDI:

In music parlance, the place denotes one and only one, the violin maestro, Lalgudi Jayaraman. Few have the privilege to enjoy such status. Even the word 'Maharajapuram' throws out the doubt whether it refers to the father or the son

'Nagaswaram gained importance because of Rajarathinam;
Flute acquired a halo after Mali;
Palghat Mani's phenomenal power gave mridangam its due.
G.N.B.'s charisma and artistry brought so many women in the music world; and
The power and position of violin is recognised due to Lalgudi Jayaraman',

said G.B. Duraiswami

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'It is no solo if he plays along with his son and daughter.'

— Anon. — Indian Express September 28, 1990

'Many accompanists who have turned soloists are not conversant with the lyrical aspect of compostion. Lalgudi is an exception. Instrumental sheen, tonal modulations and lilting phrasings made it highly pleasurable.'

Lalgudi Jayaraman collected the *Lalgudi Pancharatnas* of Tyagaraja, gave them form, structure and detail and published them.

— Subbudu

KARAIKUDI R. MANI — MRIDANGAM MAESTRO:

(b. September 11, 1945)

Through Sruti Laya, Mani has established a special relationship between rhythm in its fascinating formats and melody in its sensuous forms. The combined exercise of rhythm and tune, alternately meshing and diverging and then combining in a crescendo was a moving experience in which percussive music was bleached of its harsh dry virtuosity and was married to tonality through *swaras* without *sahitya.* The fusion of sound and rhythm produced sensations of *Sabda matra* and *Rupa matra* cited in our *Sastras.* Mani's brilliant brain has evolved music-cum-tala sequences.'

— K.S. Mahadevan

JAYADEVA & HIS *AṢṬAPADIS*: (12th Century)

'A legendary fame with only one evergreen lyric sequence to his credit made Jayadeva as memorable as Valmiki and Kalidasa though unkind literary critics have denied the *Gita Govinda* the status of Maha Kavya. The secret of its popularity lies in its theme - the love between Krishna and Radha - and its integral place in Vaiṣnava philosophy. As a poem of love - intense, sensuous and passionate, *Gita Govinda* forms a class with the universal problem of the relation between the Divine and the Human.

There are 132 imitations of *Gita Govinda* and more than 60 commentaries on it. Has been translated into most of Indian languages and many European tongues. *Gita Govinda* has 12 *sargas,* 24 *aṣṭapadis* and 90 *slokas.* The *aṣṭapadis* are the earliest specimens of regular musical compositions set to specific ragas and talas though their original music is now lost. Sarngadeva himself refers to them as obsolete ragas. Annamacharya

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mentions Jayadeva in his *Sankirtana Lakshanam.* They are all sung now in improvised tunes.'

— T.S. Parthasarathy

KṢĒTRAJNA - MONARCH OF TELUGU *PADAMS*: (17th century)

'Subbarama Dikshitar in his *Sangīta Sampradāya Pradarśini* is emphatic that for felicity of expression in *Kaisiki Riti,* depiction of the *nayaka-nayaki bhava* and musical excellence, Kṣētrajna has not been surpassed so far nor can ever be. The term *pada* was being used to denote any musical composition. Kalidasa and Jayadeva have used it in that sense. From the 17th century, it became a distinct genre of musical from with a *nayaka-nayika* motif to be sung in slow tempo in *rakti* ragas. 160 *padams* of his have been published with translation by Dr. B. Rajanikanta Rao. Kṣētrajna was a scholar- poet and *alankarika* who had thoroughly studied the *Rasa Manjari* of Bhanudatta Misra, the *Amaru Satakam* and allied literature and has presented a mind-boggling variety of *nayakas* and *nayikas.*'

— T.S. Parthasarathy

MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR — COMPOSER MAGNIFICENT:

(March 25, 1775 - Deepavali day 1835)

'Apocryphal aberrations abet anachronisms and annihilate authenticity. Dikshitar composed only the seven *Vāra* kritis adopting the seven *sūladi* talas. The compositions on Rahu and Ketu are post-facto appendages - perhaps composed by someone of Dikshitar *parampara* using his signature *(mudra)*... Etymology and lyrical graces apart, there are grammatical and *Sastraic* errors in the kriti on Ketu, not discernible in any of Dikshitar's kritis. Posterity cannot hold anyone guilty. Why? If the *Jayantasena* kriti *Vinatasuta Vahana* and the *Harikhamboji* kriti *Vinata Suta Vahanudai* can be allotropically modified as Tyagaraja kritis, what harm is there in similar treatment being extended to the Rahu-Ketu kritis?

'The dominant character of the life of Dikshitar is a mission to express and spread *bhakti* through the medium of music. He never practised *tantrika* for pecuniary benefit. His impersonal approach finds abundant focus in his compositions. He did not have even a personalised or favourite deity. His firm faith in the Supreme One is qualified only by his humanity. Dikshitar says:

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"My acts well or ill done are dedicated to the Lord who is the Saviour during my earthly sojourn and He will grant me salvation."
— *Tyāgarāje kṛtyākṛtya (Sāranga)*

"As a devotee of the Lord, I have known what deserves to be known, though I am a man of little knowledge." — *Rudrapriya kriti*

Dikshitar's systematic output embellished Venkatamakhin's musical system. His handling of *vivadi ragas* is unparalleled. There is no passage which expresses pain, suffering, disappointment or anything inauspicious.

— Dr. V.V. Srivatsa in *Bhava Raga Tala Modini*

Note: Muthuswamy Dikshitar has used 192 ragas. Ettayapuram, the place where Dikshitar attained eternity, is growing in importance. Dr. Srivatsa has practically been waging a musical crusade to propagate all the songs of the Bard of Tiruvarur through literature, concerts, cassettes and lecture-demonstrations. The learned Doctor has recorded that his research has shown that 'the super-linkage between Venkatamakhin's Melakarta Scheme and Dikshitar's prolific output is exaggerated, the maximum kritis of whom are in *bhashanga ragas*'.

'Dikshitar could be called a Sangita Sankaracharya for revealing through his kritis that worship of deities is nothing but worship of the Supreme and a Sangita Lakshya Nirmāta for composing in *melas* and derivatives.'

— Dr. R. Satyanarayana in *Sruti* 125

'166 kritis on Viṣṇu, 112 on Siva indicate the unique approach of Dikshitar to the Hindu Pantheon.'

— Dr. Nagalakshmi Suryanarayana

The life of Dikshitar was presented in a drama of 90 minutes with eminent vidwans taking part in it like *Upasane* Sitaram (Ramaswami Dikshitar), R.K. Padmanabha (Muthuswami Dikshitar), Vidyamurti (Dikshitar's wife), etc. Veteran violinist H.V. Krishnaswamimurti and Geeth Ramanujam choreographed it.

— M.N.R.

'Dikshitar has used several unique and delectable words and expressions like the soft *Gandhavāha* which signifies that which wafts, carries perfumes and denotes soft breeze. Many of us have heard the *Śrī Sūktam* passage *Padmapriyē, Padmini, Padmahastē, Padmālayē, Padmadalāyatākshi* or the

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tamil verse *Kārvaṇṇan Tirumēni kaṇṇum vāyum kaittalamum adiyinaiyum kamalavaṇṇam*. Dikshitar compresses this concept beautifully into a single term:

'Padanayanānanakara nalini'.

He enhances nobility of language - *bhāṣā gaurava* and dignity of substance - *artha gaurava*... He brings in expressions from *Vedas* and *Sastras:*

i. *Pallavi* in *Begada* starts with the first *nāma* and *anupallavi* with the second *nāma* of *Lalita Sahasranamam — Srī Mātah, Srī Mahārājyī*

ii. He compares the *dwādaśa nāmas* of *Viṣnu* in his *Goulipantu* kriti.

He is the only composer to have used the *vibhakti* technique as also *khaṇḍa ēka tāla* kritis. — Dr. V.V. Srivatsa

PAPA VENKATARAMIAH — VIOLIN MAESTRO: (1901 - 1972)

A Garland (page 201) gives an account of violin maestro, Papa Venkataramiah. 'Papa' means a child; a word of affection and of endearment if applied to others. Violinist-guru Malaikottai Govindaswami Pillai used to call his ward Venkataramiah as 'Papa' and the blessed word stuck to him to the last. The guru had such regard to his good disciple that he would not see him carry any of his luggage except his violin-box.

Pillai followed the style of Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar and drew inspiration from Veena Dhanammal and Venkataramiah inherited his guru's style. Papa would accept concerts only after assessing the merit of vocalists and the remuneration. An artiste of principles, he would not compromise on either.

Having followed Flautist Mali for the first time when the latter was young, he told him:

'You have all qualities of musicians; however
you should remember that there is a *kālapramāna for each song'.*

Mali was prompt to understand, assimilitate and follow the advice. His jet-speed concert prompted Papa to advise him so.

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar presented his young prime ward, T.N. Krishnan before Papa. Papa gave him tips on fingering techniques and told him that 'he needed nothing more'.

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PART III-A

A PEEP INTO THE REALM OF HINDUSTANI MUSICIANS

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran, while reviewing *Yet Another Garland* in *Shanmukha* (XXI-3), observed:

> *'Yer Another Garland* has bloomed in the Garden of Melody. It adds to the fragrance and hues of the earlier ones...
>
> 'Perhaps just as the realm of melody is inexhaustible, the weaving of Garland-s too should go on extending its scope to the music of the north of Vindhyas, then crossing overseas to the S.E. Asia and Far East and leap forward to the West covering the entire gamut of World Music.'

Quite a fascinating suggestion presenting an alluring vision of a magnificent vista in melody. To honour the sentiments of the learned Editor of *Shanmukha,* I provide just a brief peep into the vast glittering Realm of Hindustani Musicians.

Hindustani and Carnatic music systems are but the two sides of the coin, of same parentage, both raga-based. The former imbibed influences and characteristics of non-Indian musical systems consequent on the advent of invaders and visitors, while the latter has retained its ancient heritage intact subject to such changes and improvements which passage of time and contributions of eminent musicologists and musicians have incorporated.

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USTAD ALLAUDDIN KHAN — SAROD STALWART: (October 7, 1881 - September 6, 1972)

Place of birth	:	Shivpur in Tripura State
Father	:	Sadhu Khan, a great devotee of Siva and Sitar player.
Brother	:	Aftabuddin, a percussionist.

Allauddin was the sixth generation descendent of one Dina Nath Sarma whose son embraced Islam. He preferred to hear the music on sitar of a sadhu who lived adjacent to the temple of Siva than attend and undergo unmusical hardships at school. He found that the school was not his temple of life's pilgrimage. Unnoticed, he left his home for Calcutta and got introduced to Nanu Gopal, an expert dhrupad-dhamar singer, known for his khyal singing.

> 'If you want to become a musician you would have to spend twelve years with me and do exactly as I say',

said the guru. Allauddin assumed the hindu name of Manmohan Dey. The guru arranged for his training in mridangam and tabla under Pandit Nandalal.

> 'Seven years passed. Guruji was pleased with my single-minded devotion and studious habits. I was then able to sing thousands of note-combinations with complete ease.'

The guru gave an excellent account of his ward to Allauddin's brother—

> '...a well-behaved boy, honest and studious...has passed all tests. I am now prepared to make an excellent musician of him.'

He was taken to his village for a month when he was fifteen years' old and was married to a ten-year old girl to tie him down to his place. But he stealthily ran away to Calcutta that day itself only to learn of the demise of his beloved guru.

> 'I held my guru in such high esteem that I resolved then and there not to seek another guru. My ambition to become a singer died with my beloved preceptor's death!'

So he switched over to instrumental music!! The excellence of his character and *guru bhakti* were unexcelled. A veritable Ekalavya indeed!

Allauddin learnt violin under Habudatta, brother of Swami Vivekananda, clarionet with Girishchandra Ghosh and shenai under another. He jointed the orchestra of Girishbabu's theatre company. The zamindar of Muktagachha, Jagatkishore arranged for his training in sarod, which became his life-companion and instrument of his future advent under Khan Saheb Ahmed Ali of Rampur in

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gurukulavasa but the guru did little to enlighten the ward! The guru was of poor character while the way of life of Allauddin was an insurance against vices.

Veena Kuppayyar, when he was having *gurukulavasa* under Tyagaraja, took out one day the veena of his guru surreptitiously in his absence and was playing on it. Tyagaraja was surprised to hear successive waves of delightful music emanating from a veena from his house as he was returning home and was agreeably surprised to find that the 'good culprit' was none else than his ward! Later he was to make a trip all his way from Tiruvaiyaru to Tiruvotriyur at the request of the ward to please him. He liked him much. Even so, guru Ahmed Ali one day on return home late, after his 'advents' probably, found Allauddin playing on sarod and complimented him saying,

> 'Once your vocal chords assimilate the improvisations, it can move with perfect freedom; once your hand assimilates them, it can move freely in any raga on the sarod. Please write them down for me!'

Did not the ward become guru to his own guru? Just then, he was married to another girl to bring him into wedded life. The second wife died and Allauddin was to lead a pleasant wedded life with his first wife much later and beget worthy progeny!

Ahmed Ali found his ward too different and too disagreeably good to tolerate for long and presented him with a unique charge-sheet:

> **'You do not learn from me but gobble up anything I play! You do not eat meat!! You have no vices and your honesty is perfect!!! You are free of vices. So you can't be a human! I am not going to teach you anything!'**

Later, when he sought to meet the Nawab of Rampur, police slapped him but actually took him to the Nawab himself! The Nawab was so pleased with his music that he arranged for his training under Ustad Wazir Khan, who administered him vows that he would not visit houses of dancing girls nor lunch with them nor teach them but did not choose to teach Allauddin for thirty long months! Later Raza Hussain of Lucknow, a dhrupad singer, took Allauddin for his orchestra in a *quid pro quo* for teaching him classical music. And this not only brought him a monthly pay of Rs.12 for the first time but found him in congenial surroundings. When good turns occur, they come not in isolation. Wazir Khan also took interest in him now and the next four or five years were fruitful. At the age of 34, Allauddin was at last told that he had 'graduated'.

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Allauddin settled at Maihar on a pay of Rs.150 p.m. in the service of the ruler Maharaj Vrijananthsingh as music teacher. The ruler himself learnt under him. Settlement in profession synchronised with settlement on the home front. The first wife, like a good Indian, had waited all along with patience and fortitude and joined him. Ali Akbar, son and Annapurna, daughter and Ravi Shankar, brother of Uday Shankar became the pick of his wards. And the latter two became husband and wife to the earnest satisfaction of Allauddin who had said:

> 'It was great good fortune and perhaps the reward for the good deeds of my ancestors that I was able to secure a brahmin for a son-in-law.'

It was his earnest wish and the fulfilment was there! His life was a saga of the victory of Spirit and Conviction over tremendous odds. Unwavering resolution and uninhibited will-power and perseverance led him on the path of eminence and glory. The suffering of two decades yielded a rich dividend of a six decade era of prestige and success in the chosen field of melody.

Allauddin's reference to good deeds and good fortune in getting Ravi Shankar to marry his daughter Annapurna may remind one of the pregnant *anupallavi* in the kriti *Sundari nī divyarūpamunu (Kalyani)* of Saint Tyagaraja:

> *Mandagamana ni kaṭāksa balamo?*
> *Mundaḍi puja balamo?'*
>
> (Is it the result of Thy Grace, or due to the sacred offerings made by me?)

Titles & Honours:

Padma Bhushan	From the President of India	
Padma Vibhushan	Do.	
Sangit Natak Akademy Award		

Disciples:

Ustad Ali Akbar Khan	-	sarod	(son) (Hailed as Indian Bach.)
Annapurna	-	surbahar	(daughter)
Ravi Shankar	-	sitar	(son-in-law)
Nikhil Bannerji	-	sitar	
Ponnalal Ghosh and others.			

John D & Catherine T. Mac Arthur Foundation of America conferred a $ 3,750,000 Fellowship on Ustad Ali Akbar Khan (b. April 14, 1922), a unique honour for an Indian musician. It is said that old melodies allegedly the compositions of legendary Tansen are being brought to a compact disc by the Ustad and vocalist Asha Bhosle under the title 'Legacy'. He is said to continue the Allauddin Gharana of Maihar. Ravi Shankar is a maestro of vast fame and popularity.

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HAZRAT AMIR KHUSRAU — PATRIOT-MUSICIAN: (1253 - 1326)

His father hailed from Kash in Turkistan and his mother was daughter of a Hindu nobleman who later embraced Islam. Khusrau was proud of calling himself Turk-Hindustani and was a patriot who was proud of his Indian background. An accomplished musician and composer, he is credited with multi-sided inventions and creation of new ragas, talas, musical forms like the *khyal* and the *tarana* and musical instruments like sitar and tabla. 'A scholar, historian, writer and courtier', says Susheela Misra, he was a warm-hearted humanist and an ardent lover of Indian music. One of the most versatile and outstanding names in the history of Hindustani Music, he combined in himself the *samskara* of an Indian with a Turkish background. Hafiz hailed him as the 'Singing Bird of India'.

The following excerpt gives an indication of his passionate urges, patriotic instincts and deep musical insights:

> 'The musical system originated in India. And Indian music, the fire that burns heart and soul, is superior to the music of any other country. Foreigners even after a stay of thirty or forty years in India cannot play a single Indian tune correctly.'
>
> — *Nuh Siphir (The Nine Gems)*

* * *

SWAMI HARIDAS: SAINT-MUSICIAN: (c. 1537 - 1632)

An oft-quoted conversation between the legendary Tansen and Emperor Akbar provides succinctly and most graphically the stature and image of Swami Haridas in the field of music:

Akbar: 'How is that with all your greatness, your music is so poor compared to the Swamiji's?

Tansen: 'What else can it be? I sing to the Emperor of this land; but he sings to the Emperor of the Creation!'

Swami Haridas was an ascetic and his conjuring musical expertise and eminence are devoutly remembered and cherished by a grateful nation. Bhakti Sangeet *dhrupad* style flourished under the eminent Swami and Mathura became one of the pilgrim centres of the musically minded like Tiruvaiyaru of Sri Tyagaraja. The Swami's brindavan is the centre of music and dance festivals pioneered about three decades back by Acharya Ramgopal Goswami, He had

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been a noted guru who is credited with presenting a number of prominent musicians. Nad Vinod cites eight disciples. The connections with Tansen are disputed by some who aver that they lived at different periods and that the alleged discipleship is just a figment of imagination. His *padas* countributed much to the enrichment of music.

Susheela Misra states that different versions are in vogue about the boyhood of Swami Haridas such as—

a. Asudhir and Gangadevi, his parents, migrated to Rajpur near Brindaban before the birth of Haridas in 1537, of Jagannath in 1541 and of Govindaraj in 1545;

b. His grantparents, Gadadhar, a saraswat brahmin and Chitradi, lived in Ucchagram near Multan (now in Pakistan) and migrated.

His ascetic outlook and behaviour found no change when married to Indumati at the age of fourteen. Left his home at twenty. One of the greatest of dhrupad singers, composers and saints, he is a legendary figure of fabulous fame.

* * *

KUDAU SINGH PAKHAWAJIYA — MRIDANGIST: (1815-1910)

Kudau Singh was an artiste in the court of the renowned Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi who had carved out for herself an immortal place in the resplendent pages of Indian History. In the First War of Independence, 1857, Kudau Singh was imprisoned and kept in Datiya Jail. When Bhavani Singh Rajah ascended the throne, he released the great percussionist. In grateful memory of the gesture, Kudau Singh always wore an iron chain on his right leg saying, 'I am an eternal prisoner of the Love of Datiya'. It is stated that he would sit with his disciples every night for long sessions of riyaz till the huge candles got burnt out.

* * *

NARSI MEHTA - COMPOSER EMINENT : (c. 1414 - 1480)

Gujarat has presented successive waves of eminent men in diverse fields. Narsi Mehta born at Talaja near Bhavanagar has carved out for himself an imperishable place among them and it was his song *Vaisnava Janato* that was selected by Mahatma Gandhiji as the sheet-anchor, the *summum bonum* of his prayer meetings. Now the song is known all over Bharat.

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Narsi Mehta did not take to school willingly as many other immortals, lost his father at three and his mother at eleven, married at fourteen, lost his wife, his only son and his only son-in-law early and spent a life of composer. When he was at Junagadh with his wife, he composed the well-known 'Garland of Love Songs' and poems of love presumably inspired by *Gita Govinda.* His passionate love of Lord Krishna enjoys full and untramelled flow in his songs, which are full of devotion and philosophy. His lyrics are simple and appealing and are rich in prosodic beauties and finesse.

* * *

PANDIT OMKARNATH THAKUR — VOCAL MAESTRO:

(June 24, 1897 — Decr 29, 1967)

'Pandit Ōmkārnāthji can achieve through a single song of his what I cannot achieve through several speeches.'

— Mahatma Gandhiji

'One was struck as much by the leonine grandeur of his personality as by his stentorian voice. His compelling resilient voice with an amazingly wide tonal range seemed to blend perfectly with the dignity of his bearing.'

— Gurudev Sharan

'His dramatic presentation of songs should not only be heard but be seen too.'

— Prithviraj Kapur

'The most striking feature of my guru's music was evoking emotions in listeners through *swara, sahitya,* facial expressions, voice modulations, sonorous voice. Music was worship to him.'

— Dr. N. Rajam

'Artistes are allegedly associated with moral laxity and even vices. In such a world, Panditji's life stands out as a rare example of lofty morality, self discipline and austere living.'

— Susheela Misra.

Place of birth : Jahaaj in Cambay district.

Pandit Mahashankar Thakur, grandfather and father Gauri Shankar Thakur were warriors under Peshwa Nana Saheb and Meharani Jumna Bai. When Omkarnath was born, father turned an ascetic. Mother Jhaverba worked hard doing odd jobs to keep the family intact and she was reputed for her self-reliance, dignity and hard labour. The boy too worked as cook, mill-hand, etc., to supplement family income. The martial spirit of the family did exert its

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influence and he learnt wrestling from the world champion Gama. There was thus not much of music at home and yet Omkarnath reached the pinnacle of a musical life and glory!

Young Thakur swam across the turbulent waters of Narmada hearing that a recluse was teaching music but he was refused the privilege. Seth Shahpurji Mancherji was won over by the musical instincts of the boy and he got him admitted into the music school of Pandit Vishnu Digambar at Bombay. Six years of absolute dedication earned him the Principalship of Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya, Lahore in 1916 when it was opened. Pandit Omkarnath Thakur should have been the youngest Principal of a Maha Vidyalaya. The warrior-ascetic spirit of his father and the hard work and self-respect of his mother should have inspired young Omkarnath surely.

His marriage with Indira Devi was happy but short-lived. She died when he was in Europe and he returned broken-hearted. He loved her intensely as only a sober musical heart can and when a Calcutta audience pressed him, a sad Thakur confessed:

> 'Please excuse me. *Nīlāmbari* was the favourite raga of my wife Indira. If you persist and I sing, I may break down please. Pray, forgive me. I cherish her memory even as Rama, my favourite God, observed *ēka patnī vṛta.'*

Personal life was sad to the maestro. His last years were miserable and pathetic. Paralytic attack crippled the great man and deprived him of the use of many of his limbs and speech. He had a rich crop of disciples who got everything musical in him and when he needed help, alas, there was none! (Birds flocked when musical harvest in the melodic farm of Thakur was on and they flew away once the crop had been harvested!) He swept the floor of his house and cooked his food; and **when he died, there was none to mourn**. Mozart died so and perhaps many of the stalwarts of old had died so. A miserable lot of disciples and a miserly world knew not how to honour a maestro on the eve of his death and how to support him in his fading years.

> 'The last years of his life were very pathetic and lonely. It was a pity that he had to lead a lonely life all through. He had neither a house nor a relative; nor even a reliable servant to look after him!'
>
> — Dr. N. Rajam (BHU)

A fluent speaker, an impressive singer and bit of a dramatist, Omkarnath was a scholar. He had authored many books like:

Sangītānjali on practical aspects of music and
Praṇava Bhārati on theoretical aspects.

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He was the first Dean, Faculty of Music, Benares Hindu University in 1950. Was honoured with titles including Padma Sri. His musical eminence was great and supreme though his personal life was miserable. He gave his all to disciples and to the musical world and died literally in God's company! The public have little time to remember stalwarts whom they once applauded! As Yehudi Menuhin aptly observed:

'All artistes are some gigantic Tennysonian band of light brigadiers for ever doing and dying without questioning their fate.'

* * *

SANGIT SAMRAT TANSEN — IMMORTAL MUSICIAN: (1506 - 1589) or (1532 - 1595)

One of the legendary musical pillars of India whose names stand inscribed in undying letters of gold in the effulgent pages of Indian History. There was synthesis of styles during his time. Tansen adorned the Court of Akbar (1542-1605). He converted to Islam 'either when Peer Mohammad Ghaus blessed him or when he married Brahmani Hussain (Premkumari) a gifted singer or when Emperor Akbar gave Mehrunissa in marriage'. Various versions are in currency about his gurus - Mohammad Ghaus of Gwalior, Swami Haridas of Brindaban, Baba Haridas Bagur, etc. The alleged preceptorial reference to Swami Haridas is discounted by many authorities on grounds of incompatibility in the periods of their lifetimes. In his *Study of Indian Music,* O.C. Goswami says that Tansen was an outstanding force in the music of India, that he found Indian music an unchartered ocean of about four thousand *ragas* and *raginis* and that he discarded the bulk and retained only a four hundred. He created new ragas and composed many *padas* and sang them in *dhrupad* style. 'His sons Bilaskhan, Suratsen, Saratsen and Tarangsen perpetuated a glorious line of rababiyas from whom have descended the great sarod artistes of today', says Susheela Misra.

Tansen hailed from Behat in Marar Assembly area on the border of Bhindi. A four day Tansen samaroh is celebrated beside his tomb annually. He was an expert *dhrupad* singer. There is a rich crop of legends woven around him.

* * *

PANDIT VISHNU DIGAMBAR PALUSKAR — EMINENT MUSICIAN: (August 18, 1872 - August 21, 1931)

Hailed from the village of Palus, hence called Paluskar. Father was Pandit Digambar Gopal Paluskar, a keertankar. Was born on Rakshabandhan Day.

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While young, he lost his eyesight while witnessing fireworks at Dattatreya temple. Paluskar, like Sarabha Sastri and Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, found divine light burning inside and waded his way to eminence with his innate talents and robust dedication. For nine years, he had gurukula under Pandit Balakrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjikar, Miraj.

'His concert at the age of twenty-five at Baroda Ram Mandir was a watershed not only in his life but in the renaissance of Hindustani music.' It is said that a bhairagi set him on the road to success in life and mission as had happened in the lives of many maestros. His dignified personality, moral stature and captivating voice won the esteem and admiration of all including Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajapati Rai and Swami Shraddhānanda. He took concrete steps to further the cause of art by founding the Gandarva Maha Vidyalayas at Lahore (1901), Bombay, Poona and Allahabad. While it was all *ārōhaṇā* in the musical field, his personal life was an anti-climax of tragedy losing all his thirteen sons. His son D.V. Paluskar, who sang well and was popular, also died at the premature age of thirty-four. The home thus was a scene of isolation, desolation and unmusical losses and personal agony. Music was his sole refuge. His life was thus an enforced and uninhibited dedication - *ātma nivēdan,* where his heart and soul intensely conversed with Sri Matangi Devi, Ragas and Raginis and ancient treatises. Lesser mortals would have perished if they had been confronted with such tragedies as he had faced.

Publications:

Sangīta Amṛtapravāha (Journal)
Sangīta Bāla Prasād - 3 volumes
Sangīta Bāla Bōdha
Rāg Pravāha, etc.

* * *

ÇATUR PANDIT VISHNU NARAIN BHATKHANDE: RENOWNED MUSICOLOGIST: (1860 - 1936)

Was born on the day of Gokulashtami. Died on the day of Ganesa Caturthi!

Qualification : B.A., LL.B. Profession : Advocate.

'If the renaissance of classical music in the North is due to one man than to any other, it was due to Bhatkande.'
— D.P. Mukherji.

He was a crusader for the renaissance of Hindustani music which he installed on a lofty pedastal. He convened All-India Music Conferences at Baroda, Delhi,

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Lucknow (twice) and Varanasi and came to be called 'Father of Conferences'. He inspired opening of many colleges. Had authored numerous books.

Publications:

Abhinavarāga manjari
Abhinavatāla manjari
Lakshya Sangītam
Hindustani Sangīt Paddhati
A short Historical Survey of Music.
Swaramālikā
Gītamālika Series
Grantha Sangītam
Bhāva Sangītam
Philosophy of Music, etc.

Bhatkande was an erudite scholar who brought out the publication *Kramik Pustak Malika* (Compositions in six volumes). He devised his own notation system and the system of ten *thats* (parent scales), similar to *Melakarta ragas:*

That 1	*Yaman*	—	Corresponds to	65 *Mechakalyani*
That 2	*Bilawal*	—	"	29 *Dhirasankarabharanam*
That 3	*Khamaj*	—	"	28 *Harikhamboji*
That 4	*Bhairav*	—	"	15 *Mayamalavagaula*
That 5	*Purvi*	—	"	51 *Kamavardini*
That 6	*Marwa*	—	"	53 *Gamanasrama*
That 7	*Kafi*	—	"	22 *Kharaharapriya*
That 8	*Asaveri*	—	"	20 *Natabhairavi*
That 9	*Bhairavi*	—	"	8 *Hanumatodi*
That 10	*Todi*	—	"	45 *Subhapantuvarali*

Only ragas derived from the above are sung and not the thats.

Gomango

Giridhar Gomango was a Union Minister in the Government of India. A simple, unassuming person, he is a percussionist too. His passion for percussion is intense. In his simple rustic Indian dress with *moolakaccha* dhoti, shirt and a towel firmly set as belt, he ascended the dais at the largely-attended concert of the popular Sudha Raghunathan and gave accompaniment to her music for over half-an-hour! He uses a drum-like percussion instrument hung on his shoulder. His fond love to exhibit his expertise was clear. But the accredited percussionists were not told and would not yield primacy to him; and so there was an ensemble in result. The minister-percussionist stood like a rock on the dais all the time and would not sit along with other artistes! It was very nice of him to avail of an opportunity in the South to exhibit his skill. And he did well too.

Half-an-hour over, his mind cried 'halt' and told his percussive self,

" Go Man Go"

Out he went from the dais amidst thunderous applause and not long after from the ministry too as it was voted out at the elections!

* * *

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PART III-B

GREAT EVENTS, MEMORABLE INCIDENTS AND UNIQUE RECORDS

THE TIGER'S WIT!

The eminent Tiger Varadachariar sang a Kṣētrajna *pada*. A rasika intervened and said, 'Amma (Vina Dhanam) sings in differently!'

Tiger silenced him saying, 'Ayya sings only thus; tell Amma so'.

* * *

THE FULL POT SPILS NOT

Poondi Aranganatha Mudaliar was a keen lover of music. Once he met Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, the prime jewel of musicians and they were conversing. Not even by error did Ayyar project his musical wealth or parade his melodic eloquence or his golden voice. Meeting over, Mudaliar confided :

'He will protect and nurture music very ably'.

— Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar.

* * *

A NĀDA SĒVAKA!

Musicians normally monopolise titles and honours. Nadōpāsana Srinivasan (well-known in musical circles at Madras) has been serving the cause of music for over a quarter century with sincerity and integrity. Vide pages 249-250 of *Yet Another Garland*. If Nādōpāsakas could be honoured, should not the Nāda Sevaka be acclaimed likewise? The author consulted the rasikas of South Madras. Sangita Kalanidhi Prof. T.N. Krishnan honoured Nādōpāsana Srinivasan with the title of Nāda Sēvaka. Sangita kala Acharya S. Rajam honoured him with a shawl. The photo taken on the occasion adorns the book.

* * *

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A Historic RTP Extravaganza:

An intellectual exercise, a remarkable feat of exposition of *lakshana* and a macro *rāgām, tānam* and *pallavi* in *rāgamālikā* involving a hundred ragas! Such a feat would have gladdened the hearts of laya maestroes like Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Naina Pillai of Kanchipuram and Chittoor Subramania Pillai of yester decades. This feat was performed for Nadopasana by Chitraveena Ravi Kiran. He conceived (yes, he married just earlier) the idea in October and delivered it in November 1995.

Main raga: *Latangi* Tala : Ādi

Tānams in *Chala Nātta, Pādi, Suddhasāvēri, Vijayasri* and *Pushpalatika.*

First tempo	:	7 ragas
Tiśra gati	:	3 ragas
Second tempo	:	27 ragas
Rhythmic reduction with	16	ragas one for each *āvartana,* (cycle),
	16	ragas one for half *āvartana* each
	8	ragas one for one-fourth *āvartana each* and
	8	ragas one for one-eighth *āvartana each.*

For the climax, ten ragas are played in relay before *korvai* in main raga. The hectic speed at which this ***Shat Rāgamālikā Pallavi*** had to be contrived and executed may be imagined. The enormity of such exercise and the extensive shaping of innovative endeavours are rare in present day conditions. Of course, melody may take a back seat in such endeavours.

Destiny v. Genius:

None has taken up a probe into the loss of geniuses in the field of music, literature and arts in Bharat at the hands of fanatic marauders during the 13th to 18th centuries. History is twisted in recent decades with *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* to serve political ends. It is a huge task indeed to do the probe.

Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco **Verdi** (1813-1901) was an one-year babe. His village Roncole was sacked. Women with children ran for shelter in the church in the honest belief that it would not be violated. Soldiers forced open the doors and put to the sword all except one - Verdi's mother with her babe in arms. The mother suckling her child flew to the belfry and had hidden herself!

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Was she suckling it lest it should cry to betray its own presence? The Italian babe grew up to compose operas and church music. How many Verdi(s) escaped and how many had been lost? Lord, were You a silent witness?

Roamed Like Tramps to Help Music Survive:

Veena Seshanna, the foremost of Karnataka Vainikas, used to reminisce, says K. Srikantiah:

> 'There was a time when I used to roam about the streets of Mysore carrying the veena on my shoulders looking for homes where festoons were exhibited for chance invitation to play. I have also given many concerts for as low a fee as Rs. five.'

Till the present boom set in, it was very much so even with titans in the world of melody here. The position is no different now, avers a rasika, since top artistes have to roam about the world and fly, not infrequently, high up the Atlantic or Mediterranean or the Vindhyas and Satpuras!

Was it any different in the West? Perhaps it was worse. How many titans had fallen victims of chill penury! Oliver Goldsmith, the finest poet, author and artist, travelled across Europe on foot with one shirt alone. His flute provided him with lodging and board at nights! Beethoven, Mozart and all the great masters suffered as has been pointed out in the *Garland(s)*. Probably to take the sting out of such desperate situations, starving, fasting and penance as a religious practice came to be given special significance in Hinduism!

Music and Agriculture:

Ancient Indian literature makes mention of the beneficial impact of music on crop yields. Experiments have been carried on in India and abroad off and on to establish the nexus between musical sound and crop yields. Pondicherry Government carried out some in four villages in 1959-60. The experimental fields were exposed to recordings in raga *Charukesi* on nagaswaram. Paddy yields and straw went up from 22% to 58% and 30% to 62% respectively. A vast field for research indeed.

Humility In Masters:

Tanjore Sankara Ayyar was singing for sabha, Hamsadhwani. Suddenly he stopped and in all humility apologised for forgetting the rest of a song. The audience felt sorry for him.

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Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar spun out a joke out of a similar situation when he forgot to sing the *charanam* of a song and jokingly chided his son, maestro Santhanam when he prompted him,

> 'Keep quiet (*summā iruda*); as if the rasikas do not know the *charanam* and I have to sing it for them!'

The audience enjoyed his rapacious sense of timely wit.

At a rehearsal of a duet in *Judas Maccaboeus,* Burney came in "for a tremendous explosion of wrath in Handel's best polyglot style; but he summoned up courage to suggest that possibly the manuscript was wrong. Handel examined and instantly with the greatest humility said,

> 'I beg your pardon;
> I am a very old dog.
> Copyist is to blame.' "

Did not the Father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi take to penance for whatever he considered as his fault? Did not the Pandyan King, Nedunchezhian die on the spot when he found that he had dispensed injustice? Mankind struggles to survive on such rare episodes.

An Achievement & a Record:

(1) Sentil Murugan played on nagaswaram continuously for forty-eight hours on the 20-23rd April, 1995. Quite soon after, he died on the 30th April 1995.

(2) Muthiah Bhāgavatar of Harikēsanallūr, the musical colossus who invented twenty-two rāgas, composed many songs and adorned the Courts of Mysore and Travancore, was the first musician to get a Doctorate (from the Kerala University) in 1941. The doctorate conferred *honoris causa* was deservedly earned.

Their achievements should be taken to the *Guinness Book of Records.*

Women who had divine vision :

Karaikal Ammayar
Saraswati Bai, wife of Purandara Dasa
Padmavati, wife of Jayadeva.
Avvaiyar

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On *JAMA* (*Accompanists*): by G.N.B.:

'When appreciating a particular combination of food as my guest in Tirunelveli, G.N. Balasubramaniam said that curd rice and *vattal kuzhambu* (soup with dried up vegetables) "is like singing with Rajamanickam Pillai on violin and Palghat Mani Ayyar on mridangam'.

G.N.B. was the only prize boy who having won the first prize at the All India Music Competition run by the Music Academy attained distinction of securing the coveted title of Sangita Kalānidhi from the Academy itself.

— Justice K.S. Venkataraman,
I.C.S. in *BSS Souvenir* 1968.

Rains & Ragas: The Magic:

Muthuswami Dikshitar's *Ānandāmṛta karṣini* (*Amṛtavarṣini*) which brought copious rains to rain-starved Ettayapuram is known to all. Prof. P. Sambamurti adds:

> "The downpour was so heavy that there was anxiety. What failed to come of its own accord, came with ferocity. The next day the marriage procession of Dikshitar's brother Baluswami Dikshitar was to be held too. Ettayapuram Raja expressed concern. Muthuswami Dikshitar asked his disciple to sing the same song substituting *Stambhaya, Stambhaya, Stambhaya* in lieu of *Varṣaya, Varṣaya, Varṣaya.* Rains slowly stopped'!"

Megharagakurinji (corresponding to *Nilambari*) and *Megharanjani* as well as *Megha raga* of *Megh Mallar* of Hindustani music are reputed to help in inducing rains.

— Prof. P. Sambamurti in
BSS Souvenir, 1968.

Who can demonstrate such efficacy of these ragas now? Spiritual backing and absolute faith are *sine quo non.* The singer should be 'Pure in heart and Chaste of art'.

Young Devil & Old Saint - Licentious Misdemeanour:

Vain glory blossoms but never bears. The old saint may forgive but the young devil learns not!

It was Tyagaraja Aradhana at Kalpathi. Aesthetic arrangements had been made. The organising committee comprising stalwart celebrities, viz., Palghat Rama Bhagavatar, Mridangam Subbier and Palghat Mani invited S.K. Chettur,

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Sub Collector to grace the celebrations. The Indian Civil Service dignitary came with family and was seated comfortably on chairs in the decorated pandal. The concert began. Hardly ten minutes had passed and it was too long for the young officer to desist from lighting his torch of nicotiana with scant regard to the solemn occasion and the spiritual homage. Elders sat even as Bhisma and Drona did when Drowpati's modesty was sought to be outraged. Clouds of fumes with attendant arresting smell incited the spirit of Hampden in a boy sitting near on the floor. He stood up and respectfully appealed with folded hands, 'Sir, please don't smoke here'. The appeal was perhaps too tender and polite, since smoke clouds continued to give shapes in air to match the musician's giving shapes of *rāga swarūpas.* Probably the atmosphere was too stifling for the Sub Collector, who left with family abruptly.

The bully in him could digest his own arrogance and misdemeanour but not the humble request! A pleasant dewy morn dawned next day but witnessed the pandal being pulled down by the police! The committee members were charged for putting up the pandal without prior licence!

'He that is perverse in his ways
shall fall at once.' - Proverb 28 (18)

News reached the sensitive ears of the Rajarishi, Rajaji, then the 'Premier' of Madras, i.e., Tamil Nadu. He called Chettur to Madras, gave a bit of his mind and shifted him out of Palghat. S.Y. Krishnaswami, I.C.S. was posted with instructions to conduct the festival under government auspices again. Thanks to S.K. Chettur, the festival was held again! Chettur rose up to the top echelons too!

— Source 'Kousikan' in
Hamsadhwani Souvenir 1995.

Garlands Settle Weddings! Caveat Issued:

'... I have great pleasure in inviting your goodself to the wedding of my son, Chi. S...S... I attribute the happy event to your "*Garland*"*s* which, on opening, pointed to "Srinivasa..." helping me to decide instantly. I requested the girl, Sow... to hand them over to my son in the U.S. And the *Garlands* have done their job of uniting them both in WEDLOCK...'

This aspect of the musical garlands was not noticed so far. I was privileged to attend the happy wedding on August 31, 1995 and wish the bridal couple all prosperity.

Caveat brokers, parents and well-wishers of eligible grooms and brides.

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The Contrast:

Thunderous applause and tumultuous appreciation greeted Beethoven on May 7, 1814 at Vienna when the last strains of his exhilarating 9th Symphony drew to a historic end. But the immortal composer was blissfully ignorant of it since **he heard it not as he was deaf.** A singer had to make him aware of it turning his attention towards the audience. **Beethoven's eyes heard** and saw what a hefty and glorious acclamation he had been crowned with!

Likewise, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu could see nothing of the audience as he had lost his eye-sight and knew not how praise was lavished on him and by what sort of a personality. But **his ears saw it through** and he declined to seek medical help to get his eye-sight restored!

ONLY ONE: ONLY ONCE: NO ENCORE?

"After creating a genius
God destroys the mould." - A Poet.

The Lord, who claims the best and the essence of everything to Himself in the *Bhagawad Gita,* is here seen as highly parsimonious, a veritable Shylock. Why should he break the mould? *'Nalladōr vīnai seide adai nalaṅgeḍa puḷudiyil erivaduṇḍō?'*, queried Bharati. But this whimsical God is actually seen guilty of such capricious acts.

Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar was of a particular mould. There was, of course, a galaxy of vocalists but he was unique. Mali was so different from other eminent flautists that he was a class apart. Palghat Mani Ayyar was yet another special mould and he set in motion an era of percussive excellence. S.G. Kittappa was *non pareil* among senior dramatists when music ruled the stage; yes, the serene classical music. Who could match Todi Rajaratinam, the nagaswara titan? Apostle Sundarar and Muthu Tandavar were provided with the first catch-words to embark on their chartered careers. The kṣetrajna among the Carnatic Trinity, Muthuswami Dikshitar was drawn to Tiruttani and given a sugarcandy to commence his career as *vāggēyakāra.* Valmiki was given the word *'marā, marā'* to chant and he blossomed into the Ādikavi who legated the immortal epic *Ramayana.* Why all this partiality? Can anyone reproduce the pathos of Musiri Subramania Ayyar in *Enraikku Siva kṛpai varumo* or Madurai Mani Ayyar's vibrancy in Eppa varuvārō or T.N. Rajarathinam's exhilarating mastery in *Todi ālāpana*? 'One more *darshan* please - *innamum orutaram pārka* - Nandanar cried according to Gopala Krishna Bharati. Did he yield? No, He chose to take him into his fold and Nandanar became part of the *Paramātman!*

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Having become one with Cosmic Effulgence, where is the occasion to gather the joy of another *darshan?*

Tondaradipodi Alwar knew the proneness of the Creator to break the mould and His vagaries. So he chose to keep him away from it - at least for the time being. He prayed for the gift of being allowed to remain here and not get absorbed by Him since he had unsatiated craving for the *darshan* of Sri Ranganatha at Srirangam and had given a categorical veto to any attempt to drag him into Heavens - *...acchuvai perinum vēndēn Araṅgamānagaruḷanē!* That was the standard of his *yoga* and *tyaga.*

'Nāṭṭukkōr Bhārati', is the byword since the advent of national poet Subramania Bharati who was a unique personality, phenomenon, institution and patriot-poet *non pareil.* This vast Bharat with its population threatening to cross a thousand millions in a few years is in need of scores of Bharatis. But the mould is no more there!

Chappal as memento

Blue Mirror was the drama of Dinabandhu Mitra. A Bengali was playing the role of an Englishman terrorising Indians in pre-independence days. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the great Indian patriot, could not stand the agony for long even if it be only in a drama. He picked up his chappal and threw it up on the actor.

> 'I cannot get a better prize for my acting and
> I could not get it from a greater person!',

said the actor, who kept it as memento!

— T.S. Parthasarathy

Eminence in Dramas:

Classical music reigned supreme and ruled over the dramatic stage. In pre-mike days, the actors sang enchantingly with a sprinkling of tantalising *alapana* and occasionally *swaras* too. (I had myself sung in amateur dramas during 1934-47). I give below some names which may conjure up deathless visions of majestic rendition in the verdant minds of connoisseurs. Voice culture was *sine quo non* then.

> S.G. Kittappa and Bālagandharva (Narayan Rao) were the Abou Ben Adams in the list and were top personages in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

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Anantanarayana Ayyar (heroine roles)	C.V.V. Pantulu
K.S. Chellappa	Maharajapuram Krishnamurti
Velu Nair	
T.K. Brothers	K.B. Sundarambal
S.V. Subbiah Bhagavatar	M.S. Vijayal
V.A. Chellappah	P. Sambanda Mudaliar
Kapilavayil Ramanatha Sastri	A.V. Varadachariar
Vemuri Gaggayya	Bellary Raghavachariar
Sthanam Narasimha Rao	Honnappa Bhagavatar
Ghantasāla Radhakrishnayya	Etc.

To bring out a *Garland* for such actors who had the "Original Masters' Voice is an arduous work now. Present day dramas depend on endless verbiage and puns but little music, plot or acting.

Veterans Do So! Lord! Give us more of them!

i. The *Garlands* have mentioned how veterans like Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar had helped rising artistes. Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar himself, Dr. T.K. Murthy and many top artistes while young, had the benefit of unsolicited help from great masters whose lofty hearts throbbed musically. Here is one concerning Sangita Kalanidhi / Sangita Kala Sagara Prof. T.N. Krishnan.

'He had come to Delhi to give a solo and I had gone to hear him. He saw me and said, 'Why don't you play with me. Go and get your violin'. I rushed home and brought it. He ascertained the varnas and kirtans I knew and included them in his programme. On another occasion, he insisted on my name being inserted in the notices! He has been a great benefactor.' —Delhi Sunderrajan

ii. How could I forget Nott Annaji Rao, veteran actor and father in *pūrvāśrama* of Swami Haridhos Giri! I just returned from school. He picked me up and gave a role in the drama in which he and other veterans like P.S. Velu Nair and Velammal were acting at the Otṛavāḍai (Walltax) Theatre in 1935-6.

iii. Mendelssohn saw a boy-chorister in Birmingham in 1846 playing on the pianoforte. He tapped the boy saying,

That's not the way to play, my boy; let me show you.'

He sat down and played the whole number. A lesson from a master *gratis!*

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iv. Papanasam Sivan saw me humming a tune while young. His gracious heart responded and he took me to his house to start on my musical lessons.

v. *"Yānaikku oru kālam vandāl, Pūnaikkum oru kālam varum."* (If the elephant luckily gets a chance, the cat too would get its chance in due course.) The tamil proverb runs so.

The proverb was proved true by Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi, the one lady musician known from the United Nations to the corners of Bharat. Visrānti is an organisation that provides shelter and food to helpless old women. The aged unfortunate women had the lucky-break and joy of their lives when M.S.S. visited the Home and sang for an hour and a half solely for them and the girls from the allied welfare home called 'Malarchi'. All sat like frozen statues of diverse shapes totally lost in divine music comprising *Ganesa Pancharatna, Maitrīm Bhajata, Meera Bhajan, Bhaja Govindam, Tiruvachakam,* etc.

Tears flowed down the cheeks of the aged emotionally charmed by the presence of the greatest Lady in Melody and her enthralling rendition. That too, for them alone!

A lady of ninety-three fell at the feet of M.S.S. saying that she saw on her face the same divine smile that she had seen in Meera film sixty years back. Blind Yasoda found her musical instinct swelling up in the presence of this Goddess and sang the song sung by M.S.S. in Meera, *Charācharamē...* Without knowing the identity of the VIP, the lady told her that it was from Meera film and it had been her ambition to meet her idol, 'that MSS!'. MSS confided to her that she was that same MSS who had come to see her. Bountiful feminine tears in the eyes of all inmates revealed how grateful all of them were to sit so close to her, hear her profoundly soulful music and chat as equals!

M.S.S. had contributed lavishly for many causes. But this one enjoys the soul of pure solicitude, the acme of understanding and rare magnificence indeed. The Queen of Melody so near and so beneficent and affectionate!

vi. Beethoven was **poor** but his musical heart was fabulously **rich** notwithstanding his temper. As he was on his walks once, he heard snatches of his last symphony being played with expression but on a bad piano. And he heard the conversation too:

'Oh, if I could only do justice to it! Brother,
It is so beautiful, I would go many a mile to hear it well played.'

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'Sister, were we wealthy, we could have such;
but as it is, they are far beyond our reach.
Perhaps some day you may master it.'

Beethoven entered the poor home, took over what was but an apology for a piano from the blind girl and played.

'Who can you be, to play like this!', exclaimed the blind girl with musical instincts and talents in utter amazement and quite soon it dawned on her. She gleaned the truth from his play and cried out in joy *Eureka.'*

'I know you can be no other than Beethoven!'

She danced deliriously in the blind joy of sweet revelation. To the prayer of the poor brother and his blind sister, Beethoven promised to come daily, though he could not keep it up.

Gratitude:

Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu was sent out of school by a teacher on the ground of his near-blindness. Time passed on. He became great. He did not forget the teacher and bore him no illwill. Was not the teacher the prime architect who placed him on the destined path of eminence? He helped the teacher too.

Beethoven was on the brink of starvation after the burial of his mother. Ries, a violinist, advanced him a little money. Years had rolled on. Ries, the junior, waited on Beethoven, who not only assured the young musician of his favour but asked him to tell his father that 'I have not forgotten the death of my mother'.

Uncomfortable Starts and Uncertain Ends:

Some artistes start tuning only after they ascend the dais; sometimes, it is a little uncomfortably long. Even so, when they end raga *alapana,* they tend to drag it on undecidedly to the discomfiture of many - one may be pardoned to say — like a dying person unable to breathe his inevitable last!

Some do the exercise in advance and commence and end sharply. This has a relevance in view of the reduced concert-time also.

— MNR

Love, Music and Murder!

Some love music and some murder it! Aurangazeb desired music to be buried eternally. Fanatics are unaware of the charms of melody. Music has

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always been the prime food of those that 'trade in love' as it has been for those striving for divine blessings.

A Venetian nobleman enticed Hortensia for her beauty and engaged Alessandro Stradella for musical instruction. The musically-inclined beauty fell in love with the musician and both eloped. The Venetian engaged desperadoes to chase and assassinate them both. They spotted the duo at Rome and decided to kill the musician at a church performance. The music so overpowered the desperadoes that they succumbed to its bewitching magical appeal. They returned guiltless of blood. The Venetian would not however leave the lovers. A fresh set of killers found the lovers at Turin. Stradella was stabbed only to recover later and marry Hortensia! But Genoa saw both being murdered by assassins at bed!

The Venetian wanted his lady-love to be musical. The lady loved the tutor and his music. The tutor loved his ward. Love and passion took them out on flight; but the sharp edges of knives sniffed out their lives once they slept as man and wife!

— Source F.J. Crowest.

Genius Lay Buried!

i. Annamacharya is now recognised as a master composer. Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams has a special wing to propagate his songs. Till the copper plates with his songs inscribed thereon were unearthed some five or six decades back, he was totally in the dark with attendant lack of publicity and loss of due popularity. Now he is hailed as Pada Kavita Pitāmaha, Sankīrtanācharya and Dravidagāna Sārvabhauma.

ii. *Caturdaṇḍi Prakāśika* of Venkatamakhin which created a revolution in codification and streamlining of ragas was in cold storage with attendant loss of knowledge of it and follow up till the family of Muthuswami Dikshitar brought it to focus. Even Tyagaraja had not followed its condification and nomenclature of ragas.

iii. Uthukadu Venkatasubba Ayyar's inimitable, enchanting songs on Lord Krishna, which are now the delight of musicians and dancers, were safe-deposited in the untouched recesses of family attics till Nidamangalam Krishnamurti Bhagavatar unearthed and brought them to the notice of the music world.

iv. *Thevaram* was secreted to save it from fanatic invaders. Raja Raja Cholan unearthed them but a part of it had been lost by then.

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v. Purandaradasa legated thousands of songs. For long, he was venerated as a saint and his songs were not given the attention due to them. Perhaps he did not leave behind disciples like Tyagaraja. Consequently, the music of his songs has been lost.

Service To Music?

'I am not optimistic of finding anyone doing service to music since—

i. the *saṅgīta ārādhaka* is the beneficiary and music is the benefactor where one conducts *aradhanas* with high ideals,

ii. the beneficiaries are the students even when the teacher imparts training selflessly; and

iii. it would be most superfluous to speak of musicians earning out of music when they do not approach the first two categories.

Even the great Trinity (or *lakshaṇikas* like Venkatamakhin) did not claim that they were 'serving music'!

— Prof. R. Visweswaran

The Golden Era:

'South India which had been comparatively free from disturbing influences till very recent times enjoyed complete peace under the Hindu sovereigns, who continued to patronize learning and arts and encourage the assembly of learned men in their courts... For a period of 350 years (1532 to 1675 under Nayaks and 1675 to 1855 under Marathas), more than 125 authors gave the country first-rate output in more than 500 works of enduring value besides their contribution to the development of fine arts like music.'

— P.P.S. Sastri in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Serfoji Maharaja Library* (1934)

Thunder-clap at Concert!

A Garland (page 187) mentions the incident of a scorpion falling on the head of Violinist Semmangudi Narayanaswami Ayyar at a concert playing for Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar.

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A like incident: Handel normally had twelve first violins, twelve seconds, four or more bassoons and a host of others; quite a huge orchestra. At one of his concerts, a thunder-clap burst right over the building! King George II who was in the audience exclaimed

> "How sublime! What an accompaniment!
> How this would have delighted Handel!'

Thunder-clap was perhaps one more to the army of artistes with Handel!

The Penny He Had Not Had, Promoted Him!

The young man approached the great Offenbach for a job: and he accepted the offered minor role of a gentleman who just had to cross the stage throwing a penny into a blind man's hat. Rehearsal over, the boy in need regretted his inability to play the role.

> "Why", enquired the maestro, "Is it not of sufficient importance?"
>
> "No sir, it is on account of the penny."
>
> "Well, what of that?"
>
> "I have not one."

Offenbach was moved and gave him a good salary. The boy was Albert Glatigny, later author of *Le Bois*!

Certainly, one needs a parallel from nearer home. Naina Pillai of Kanchi, a colossus and a laya maestro, found in Chittoor Subramania Pillai a good disciple with a future. To ensure his stay with him, he was confidentially sending money to his hapless mother at home. Chittoor came to know of it too late to express his gratitude to his guru.

All know the legend of the great C.R. Das giving a rupee or so to a young boy as gift and that boy flowering into a rich man himself using that coin with prudence.

Sahitya Bhava? To Whom Goes The Credit?

Eminent violinist Wieniawski played *Reverie et Caprice* of the great French instrumentalist, Berlioz. Well exhausted, as it ended, he whispered to Mandelssohn,

> 'I am glad I got through it. Never had such a task in my life. I have not the remotest idea of what I have been playing or what it was about'.

Just then, Berlioz was exclaiming,

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'Never have I heard an artist who has so completely caught my meaning and wonderfully interpreted it!'

Who gets the credit here? Self-revealing lyric or the unconsciously interpreting violinist? Do we not see vocalists delighting rasikas with *bhava-rasa* though the language of the song is foreign to them? Here, Art goes to the succour of the Artiste and bales him out.

Pallavi:

Once concert started with *pallavis,* it is understood. The item came to be relegated to the latter half presumably to enable the musician and also the rasikas to warm up due to its heavy and strident demands on them.

Once, it was a *pallavi* at a concert in 64 *kalais!* When the vocalist recommenced after the turn of the violinist, the latter stood up and started. When queried, he clarified:

'There is now time for me to go, have a cup of coffee and come back to resume my turn.'

— T.S. Satyavati

64-kalai rendition is so lethargic, sluggish in movement that it is not handled!

Gita Govinda Integrates:

The Song Celestial, the Song Divine, *Gita Govinda* has led to cultural integration in Bharat in a measure next only to the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata.*

'Garland' Reminisces:

The Bhisma of Carnatic Music, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar blessed me when I took up the *Garland* series. He searched for a typed sheet; finding it not there, phoned to his disciple, who rushed in on a scooter and picked it up. The promptitude, the gesture and the solicitude shown were exemplary and could not be forgotten. He gave the typed sheet and told me that I could write what was known to me mentioning that the sheet contained only some information on titles. A rare experience, it was. **Had he entered the services, he would have flowered into one of the most successful bureaucrats!** What was a loss to services has come to be a himalayan gain to melody! (Incidentally, he is *engal oor mappillai* - son-in-law of my village.)

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Sangita Kalanidhi D.K. Pattammal came out and presented an apple and blessed my project. Parur M.S. Anantaraman not only gave full details about his family but a cup of flavour-rich 'filter coffee'.

I visited a cultural centre on the eve of a big music festival to be held there in 1988 after informing the organisers in advance. I requested that the vidwans present might be requested to give full details - an announcement of just a sentence or two. 'No, you need not do it', was the prompt blessing of the great artiste! I returned home retracing the three hundred kilometres without waiting for the concerts.

Dr. (name withheld), a lady of laudable culture, who has been doing unique and yeoman service to propagate and popularise Carnatic music in United States, sent me a cheque for five hundred dollars to help me to pursue the project. I was pleasantly touched by the unsolicited gesture and its praiseworthy grace. When she has been doing so much for the art, where was need for more? I could not reconcile myself to accept the monetary help. I accepted the cheque but **not its contents!** (Hope she had understood me.)

S. Rajam, the rare cavalier musicain-artist, promised all help to the project. If I had not availed of his services adequately, it was my mistake. Such professionals belong to a rare refined breed of cultured artistes!

Instruments Coaxed To Obey Commands:

It is well-known how Veena Balachander (18.01.1927 - 13.04.1990) would coax and extract out of veena every possible extended *sangati and sanchara.* It is said that in the west, Paganini would make his violin speak in all voices from the thrill of winds and gales to the bray of donkey. Chitti Babu (13.10.1936 - 09.02.1996) is famous for his cuckoo call on veena. Mali would give a repeat of the horn of car when the sound reached him at the concert. Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan would give shapes to myriads of sounds. Mandolin Srinivas and Mandolin (Śelvi) Nagamani bring out sweet strains of titillating continuity from the Westerm instrument. Perur Subramania Dikshitar and Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar did likewise on harmonium.

Militants:

Violinist Spohr and his disciples submitted themselves to have shaves at a camp. As each had a scar, a sore place under the chin due to holding the violin for years Spohr had innocently requested the barber to go over it lightly. When

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he noticed the same with all, the barber shouted, 'You all belong to a secret society; you all carry the sign and I see it clearly!'

— (Source: SJC)

It Needed Air!

Dr. M. Greene : 'Well Sir, what do you think of my solo anthem?

Handel : 'I think it wanted air. I have hung it outside the window!'

— (Source: SJC)

Noblesse Oblige!

Cherubini, a musical giant, died. Rossini who had great admiration for him, sent a portrait of Cherubini with a touching message to his wife:

> 'Here is the portrait, madam, of a truly great man who is as young in your heart as he is in my mind.'

I distinctly remember how Rajaji expressed his sorrow on the passing away of Satyamurti, the patriot-orator and connoisseur of music:

> 'An irresistible will to live and serve the country has been of no avail...'

and on the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru:

> '12 years younger than me, 120 times more important to the country and 1200 times more popular...'

How Subramania Bharati reacted when venerable Subbarama Dikshitar, author of *Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini* died has been mentioned in A *Garland* (page 325). Nobility is always noble.

***Nṛisimha Bharaṇi* and Prime Minister:**

Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna is an innovative maestro of vast parts, deep penetration and quick delivery who knows what to project, how and when. Andhra Pradesh Kalavedika got up a function on December 2, 1995 to honour eminent personalities. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was the Chief Guest. Dr. Balamuralikrishna, who incidentally is Pro-Chancellor of Telugu University, invented the raga *Nṛisimha Bharaṇi,* composed a song too and dedicated it to the Prime Minister on the occasion.

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That a musician is Pro-Chancellor is a historic occurrence; that he invented a raga, composed a song, sang and dedicated it to a Prime Minister in the South is another historic event!

B.R.C.Iyengar wrote on this, 'Theoretically 34776 ragas could be derived; a majority of the ragas are not popular due to *vivadi doṣa* but the greatness of the *vāggēyakāra* lies in his ability to compose songs avoiding the *doṣa.* The great tragedy is that the lay listener is carried away by such gimmicks!'

— *Sruti* 141

Moon Has Its Black Spots!

Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was a Jewish-German composer of orotorios and concert-overtures. He did not like his sister Fanny publishing her songs but chose to publish six of hers along with his own without giving her the credit!

'Beethoven's temper and peculiarities made it impossible for him to live peaceably with mankind. Had he poured the vials of his wrath upon a possible Mrs. Beethoven, there would have been squalls ...His diary tells us: 'Nancy (house-keeper) is indeed quite a beast', 'The cook's off again - I shied half-a-dozen books at her head', etc.

'Handel had a habit of abruptly leaving company upon the pretext of sudden inspiration observing, 'Oh! I have the thought". Once an enthusiast (using the key-hole) beheld Handel emptying an excellent bottle of burgundy leaving his guests outside the room with the humble port!'

— Frederic J. Crowest

Thy Displeasure Is Others' Pleasure':

G.F.F. Verdi (1813-1901) showed his *Il Trovatore* to his friend, a musician and critic. The connoisseur rejected it as 'trash and rubbish'. Verdi embraced him in joy!

'What do you mean?
'I resolved to please all except purists and classicists like you.
What you say assures me of success!'

Verdi's decision to reach the proverbial Kāmadhēnu, the populace rather than the few purists paid rich dividends! It has been the trick of most trades.

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Lashes For Artistes!

About 30 artistes, who had not had their entertainment programme pre-approved by Islamic censors, were whipped in public in Mogadishu. An Islamic court sentenced each musician, singer and dancer to 20 lashes. Muslim leader Sharif Sheikh Muhyadin said the group had performed obscene dances that were against Islamic law. Some women singers were temporarily spared the beating, after it was proven they were pregnant. The group leader. Abdullahi Iiman, accused the court of human rights abuses and appealed for help from abroad.

— *The Hindu*

Hairs! Hairs!!

If Harry is hairy, it is not news. But when it is a relic of someone great, it is.

Johann Strauss (1825-1899), Viennese composer of the *Blue Danube,* was handsome 'with lovely eyes and a mass of wavy black hair extravagantly long'. Musical women in the States went almost wild over him and were delirious. He distributed his locks to hundreds of them with his compliments.

Yet when he left the States his locks were as ***abundant*** as before! But his beautiful dog, the black-haired retriever, looked like a ***shorn poodle*!!**

A Viennese lady desired to possess a lock of Beethoven's hair. The intermediary asked the great composer to send a lock of hair from a goat's beard which resembled his hairs. The innocent lady got that gift of her life! When later she got scent of the deception, her spouse wrote an indignant letter to Beethoven. Promptly, the lady received a letter of apology with a lock of the genuine!

Paderewski preserved all the fall-outs, remnants, bits, etc.

Fortunately, such a craze is not seen now. No one can predict when it would reassert!

Indians presumably care a hair for these!

Astounding Achievement:

The view that some maestros of the past sang taking a particular raga for a full concert etc. is discounted by most now. Here is what the veteran Titte Krishna Iyengar stated:

> 'During a festival, Patnam Subramania Ayyar, much respected at the Mysore Court, sang *Khamboji* one whole evening and the tanam alone the second day. Violin Tirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer's *Khamboji* was unforgettable. It is still ringing in my ears!'

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The First:

'*Thevaram* hymns could be said to constitute the first regular musical compositions in tamil set in definite ragas and talas.'

— Selvi Jayalalitha, then Chief Minister,
Tamil Nadu (December 1991,
at the Music Academy).

Ancient:

'India during *Vedic* times (5000 B.C.) possessed the most perfect scale from which other modes were derived by a shift of science... Even during the era of the *Ramayana,* Kiṣkinda and Lanka were well advanced in the art of dance and music. Later the Dravidian had their *sangita* so well evolved that it would seem identical with the system of Bharata... The Aryan genius for assimilation of everything good in other cultures is perhaps best illustrated in the integration of the Dravidian with their own music.'

— T.V. Subba Rao

'The practice of the *grama* ragas is mentioned in *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and *Harivamsa.*'

— Swami Prajnanananda

'The following terms occur in *Ramayana* - IV Cauto:

'Sthāna - mūrcchana kovidam'

'Bhartaram swara - sampannan
gāndharvaviva rūpiṇam'

'Jātibhih saptabhir - yuktam
Tantrī - laya samanvitam ...
Rasair - yuktam kāvyametajnayatam.'

— Swami Prajnanananda

In Vedas, two priests are said to play on veenas to the accompaniment of a third who renders gitam at an *aswamedha yaga.*'

— R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar

Art Knows No Shackles or Bondage:

a. "The harikatha maestro Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar was captivated by our enacting the *Ramayana.* He complimented us for using chaste Carnatic songs in classical style in our dramas. When we thought of enacting *Siva Lila,* Bhagavatar agreed to provide the drama script being himself an erudite scholar. He consulted T.K. Muthuswamy in

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selecting scenes which would be attractive. Amateur dramatist, F.G. Natesa Ayyar and others gave much help. Kavignar Syed Imam Pulavar composed the songs exquisitely. He had earlier given songs for the Christian theme Gnanasoundari too. Pulavar was fully conversant with Puranic episodes and message. The elegance and merit of Tamil Isai came to be stressed too. Is it not a creditable achievement for a muslim composer to bring out the soul and essence of Siva's Wondrous Plays in songs? ...."

b. It was Satyavan-Savitri drama at Tiruvannamalai and I was playing the role of Sage Narada on the stage. The famous Seshadri Swamigal entered the theatre suddenly, ascended the stage, took over a garland kept by an individual, put it on my neck and went out without a word to the delirious applause of the audience. I could never forget that great honour and blessing.

— Avvai Shanmugham

Śata Rāga Ratna Mālika Vandana:

Sri Tyagaraja Bhakta Brundam, Kollegal celebrated the *Aradhana* with a 100 ragas and kritis specifically selected for the purpose by designated musicians both in 1994 and 1995. Laudable efforts!

She Had Her Values!

Tirunelveli Subbuthayi, a charming devadasi and vocalist, was forced by friends and relatives to act in the famous film Ambikapathi. She declined to be heroine if the hero was not a brahmin and M.K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar was not one. Hence she acted only as queen with P.B. Rangachari, a brahmin, as king. They did not touch each other in the film; and to avoid embarrassments, she bade goodbye to films for ever! There had been gems of such characters!

— B.M. Sundaram in *Sruti.*

Colossuses React Alike! Life-line Of The National Soul:

Saluva Narasingaraya of Penukonda struck with the beauty and elegance of the songs of Annamacharya asked him to compose one on himself. The eminent Sankīrtanāchārya and Pada Kavita Pithāmaha declined and was hauled into prison for his refusal. Pedda Dasari reacted in like manner and suffered a similar treatment. They believed, in line with the guideline propounded by Prahlada, that their compositions were for and on the Lord alone. *'Appanai Pāḍum Vāyāl suppanai pāḍuvēnō'*, revolted their bhakti- soaked minds. Here *'suppan'* may be taken to refer to vain mortals!

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Here is a historic event of the same genre of this century. The grand national anthem, which Rabindranath Tagore called 'The Morning Song of India' signifying the 'awakening of the Soul of India' singing the Victory of her Lord, was itself born of circumstances similar to those cited above. **That the Soul of the Nation is immortal** could be gleaned from this! Here is what Rabindranath Tagore has himself said in his letter of November 20, 1937:

> "A friend, influential in Government circles, had importuned me to compose a song in praise of the King. His request had amazed me; and the amazement was mingled with anger. It was under the stress of the violent reaction that I proclaimed, in the *Jana-gana-mana-adhināyaka* song, the Victory of the Dispenser of India's Destiny who chariots eternally the travellers through the ages along the path rugged with the rise and fall of nations - of Him who dwells within the heart of man and leads the multitude. That the Great Charioteer of Man's destiny in age after age could not by any means be George the Fifth or George the Sixth or any other George, even my 'loyal' friend realised; because however powerful be his loyalty to the King, he was not wanting in intelligence!"

This song was first sung on December 27, 1911 at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress just two days prior to the arrival of the King-Emperor. Composing a song in his praise, the bard considered to be an act of unbounded stupidity. His patriotic spirit instead hymned the Victory of the Eternal Charioteer to whose glory alone he was capable of singing. May the shining Lamp of the Eternal Spirit of India glow with all effulgence!

— Source: Chinmayee in *The Heritage* 8/86.

Concerts in processions:

One sees *bhajans* and nagaswaram recitals on streets. *Thevaram* and *Veda gānam* would follow deities on streets. But when Saptastana Palanquin is taken through the seven villages in Tiruvaiyaru belt carrying the icon of Sri Praṇatārtīśwara, there used to be *ad hoc* concerts tooi as the one cited below.

Umayalpuram Krishna Bhagavatar and Sundara Bhagavatar sang *Dorakunā ituvanṭisēva (Bilahari)* with raga alapana and kriti. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar was asked to sing and he sang *Nājīvādhāra (Bilahari)* with kriti and swara delineation. The same raga was chosen as it was morning.

— Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar

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PART III-C

THOUGHTS, SAYINGS, APHORISMS & EPIGRAMS

Replace *Mālavagaula:*

A straight-notes raga like *Kharaharapriya* is more suitable than *Mālavagaula* for the earlier phases of teaching.

— S.R. Janakiraman

Some institution may like to experiment with it!

* * *

Dacoit & Dr. Padma Subramaniam!

Padma is dancer-researcher-thinker-danseologist *par excellence* and has won the hearts of rasikas. When she was touring Madhya Pradesh, one tall hefty mustachioed man attended her concerts regularly. When he met her, she found that he had a sound knowledge of her dance. Then he made a request for being photographed with her. When asked, he was found be a 'daku' (decoit)! Padma was flabbergasted. But chanting *Durga Aṣtakam,* he told her, 'To my eyes you look like Durga'.

— Bhuvana in *Indian Express*

* * * *

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Rāgavibodha of Soma

Soma appears to have been a practical musician, a great scholar and *Rāgavibodha,* an elegant book... masterly couplets in the melodious metre called *Arya*... This book would enable me to compose a treatise on the music of India...'

'In the literature of the Hindus, all nature is animated and personified; every fine art is declared to have been revealed from heaven; and all knowledge, divine and human, is traced to its source in the *Vēdas...*'

— Sir William Jones.

Grama Music:

i. 'The *gāndhāragrāma* is mentioned in *Mahabhārata,* in some puranas, in *Pañcatantra,* in Nānya Deva's *Bharata Vārtika,* in Narada's *Sangita Makaranda* and by Sarngadeva. But it is not mentioned by Bharata and is called obsolete by Sarngadeva. It is identified with the *Sāman* scale in *Nārada Sikṣa.'*

ii. By *Grāma* music is meant the system of the *jātis, grāma ragas,* etc., based on the two *grāmas.* After Sarngadeva, authors derive the ragas from the *Sa-grāma.* The *Ma-grāma* had become defunct, its *panchama* having become a variety of the *madhyama.*'.

103278

— N.S. Ramachandran

Dēśi V. Mārgi: Potential Threat:

'The very first reference to *mārga* and *dēśi* is in Matanga's *Brhaddesi.* This got crystallised in *Sangita Ratnakara* in 13th century. In the *Swaragata Adhyaya,* it states that what was discovered by Brhma and other gods and expounded before Siva by Bharata and others, that which is bound by rules and regulations and elevates is *mārga* and that which entertains the heart according to the tastes of listeners in regions is *dēśi.'*

— Dr. R. Satyanarayana

A chief factor in transformation is the *Dēśiya* mode of rendition which commonly resorts to the use of notes which impart a catchy air to a particular raga.... This tendency was strongly criticised by Vidwan K. Varadachariar in his Presidential Address at the Music Conference held in 1932 by Madras Music Academy:

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"I believe that except in *Mukhari* and *Bhairavi* the foreign note is a trespasser. While long prescriptive rights cannot be ignored, it is up to us to prevent intrusion. If a courageous stand is not taken to prevent future encroachment, the processes of attenuation and dilution will destroy the form and beauty of our ragas."

— N.S. Ramachandran

After tracing the usage of the words *'mārga'* and *'dēśi'* in different treatises, Dr.R. Satyanarayana, on the issue of contemporary relevance of these terms, says:

"The terms *mārga* and *dēśi* are no longer applicable in their original connotations. For what was called *mārga* is now extinct and what was called as *dēśi is now classical or sastriya. Nevertheless, the scattered tendency among scholars is to equate mārga* with music conforming to lakshana and *dēśi* with music which does not (eg. folk music, light classical, etc.)"

'Hamsa' & 'Hamsadhwani':

'The word *Hamsa* in sanskrit connotes all that is noble and great. There are not less than 41 ragas commencing with the word *Hamsa*, the popular ones being *Hamsadhwani, Hamsanādam* and *Hamsānandi. Hamsadhwani* was coined by the celebrated Ramaswami Dikshitar who composed a *prabhanda* in it. His son and one of the Carnatic Trinity, Muthuswami Dikshitar honoured the raga with his kriti Vātāpi *Ganapatim,* the most favoured one to commence concerts.'

— T.T. Vasu, President, Music Academi, Madras.

Hamsa is not only the divine bird but the natural sound ever immanent in sentient beings.

— C.V. Bhimasankaram in *Kalyana Kalpataru* (XL-1)

Indian Legacy Suffices:

'India does not need an involvement with Western music since it has a beautiful legacy of its own classical music and Fusion music does not work.'

— Zubin Mehta at New Delhi

Mukhāri Rāga:

'*Mukhari* is commonly believed to be a *śōka rāga* - a raga which reflects pathos. It is not wholly true. By shifting the emphasis from certain notes and by giving prominence to certain phrases, the *śōka* character can be diluted.'

— Prof. P. Sambhamurti

'Mukhāri is *"maṅgalakara" rāga.'*

— Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar in *Sri Krishna Lila Tarangini*

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What is wrong in using or reserving *Mukhari* for *śōka*?

A Call To Young Musicians

'One would wish that young artistes paid more attention to improvement of standards. Till one establishes a name, gimmickry to grip listener attention is excusable because the rat race is intense enough to call for manipulation. But once popularity has been gained, can they not divert their energies to improve their own standards paying more attention to nourishing the kirtanas with good home practice, reducing time devoted to mechanical swara deluge...!'

— S.V.K. in the *Hindu* 16.06.1995

Richness of '22-Sruti System' Vital:

'Currently available musicological tools are still not fully adequate to convey the richness and complexity of the Raga System as practised in India... The equi-tempered scale caters to harmony. It certainly does not reflect the more central theme of Indian Music, which is based on intonation... That quarter tones, microtones, well known in Western music, are adequate or can be pressed into service in explaining non-equitempered scales or other features of Indian Music will take the essence out of our system.

The result is that the richness of the full 22-*Sruti* system so vital to melody fades into mere 12 *swarasthānas* which are regimented still further into equal intervals to suit Western harmony concepts...'

— R. Srinivasan, University of Madras in '*Current Science*' 68/9.

Sangita:

The word denotes *samyak - gīta,* to cause music. In kriti, the laya aspect determines the metre, the count, the *akṣara - sankhya. Rasa bhava* regulates the choice of raga and swara. Kriti is fusion of *bhava, raga* and *tala.*

Muthuswamy Dikshitar enhances nobility of language, *bhāṣā gaurava* with expressions from *Vedas* and *Sastras* as in:

i. Pallavi in *Begada* starts with the first *nāma* and *anupallavi* with the second *nāma* of *Lalita Sahasranāma*

— *Sri Matah*

ii. He compares the *dwādaśa* names of Viṣnu in *Gowlipantu* kriti.

— Dr. V.V. Srivatsa.

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Child, The Father Of Man?

Is a *janya raga* later in birth than the *mela raga* to which it belongs? Some janyas are actually older than their parent *melas.* S.R. Janakiraman, the eminent musicologist, writes:

> 'The genus-species system was an advent of the 14th century. 15 melas and 50 janyas are mentioned in Vidyaranya's *Sangita Sara* (1320-1380). Most of those *melas* derived their names only from the old and well-known ragas. *Sri Raga* is an instance of such a *mela.'*
>
> *Sri Raga* is mentioned in works like *Sangīta Makaranda* (7-9th centuries).... *Kharaharapriya* (on the other hand) is found for the first time only in *Sangita Sārasangrahamu* and *Sangraha Chūdāmani* (18th century)... In fact, the histories of these two rāgas have got mixed up with each other... *Kharaharapriya* though the name has been a new coinage in the *Kanakangi* nomenclature has existed ever since the conception of our age-old *suddha* scale...'
>
> — *Souvenir* of the Music Academy and *Shanmukha.*

Music & Wives!

Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar mentions that *Purapporuḷ Veṇba Mālai* says that wives could considerably assist their spouses with their music. **Presumably there is no work which specifies how husbands could help women composers** since to reach gender parity among composers, world has to strive hard to get more women turn to composing. Eminent Vedanayakam Pillai (1826-1889) extols the merits and sacrifices of 'wife' in his song *Pattini pōlavē ittarai mīdinil uṟṟavar yār manamē?* (*Samkṛandanapriya* in *mela* 22) thus:

P. 'O mind! Who is there to match the wife?

A. In troth wife is next to mother;
Because of wife, there is samsāra!

C. Wives and we constitute composite bodies;
That's the essence of *Manu Niti* too.

The good one lends grace to home;
Rest of kith and kin stand far outside; just a crowd!

Sans all others, just a wife
Is akin to a shower of gold.
Possessing all *sans* a wife,
House is but a lake without water!

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And he laments her intense sufferings in the context of her substantial contribution and laudable merits. This song has been sung in the film Kannagi with heart-rending pathos by Kovalan (P.U. Chinnappa) when he returns back to his home to live with his wife Kannagi (Kannamba). It was too late as Fate had decided otherwise!

Eminent Neurosurgeon (Brig. B. Ramamurthy) Avers:

Many vocalists, male and female, young and old, close their eyes as they perform. Some faces absorb this as a natural habit while some faces tend to betray it as bordering the unnatural. Jocularly it may be said that a few close their eyes unable to bear the agony of the audience forced to sit and listen. Several musicians do it with a view to have an inward assessment, audit and appreciation of their rendition. I approached Brigadier (Hony) B. Ramamurthy, the eminent neurosurgeon and a great rasika, on this. He states:

> "You have mentioned this as a defect. I would have thought otherwise. The visual stimulus is the most powerful impulse and shutting this out helps concentration. That is why in meditation, you are advised to keep your eyes closed.
>
> Of course, if one has become a great *yogi*, then one can meditate with the eyes open. Many people when they are listening to a lecture or to a concert close their eyes to enjoy more. In fact, I would have thought that **it adds to the exquisiteness of music** when singers close their eyes and sing and not go on looking at the various personalities in the audience."

So, the most competent doctor has blessed the habit or the practice. Musicians, wish you all the best out of the musical yoga!

Raga Śankarābharaṇam in *Tamil Isai*:

Literally it means ornament of Sankara; Sankara is linked with burning ghat (*śudu nilam* in tamil). *Arumpālai* is the *paṇ* (raga) of those in '*Pālai*' (desert). *Arumpālai* is thus *Sankarābharanam*, says Dr. V.P.K. Sundaram. Sounds not convincing!

The musical tribe, Panars were passing through a desert when they were surrounded by robbers. When threatened, the Panar Chief nonchalantly took out his harp/lyre (yal) and played in raga *Arumpalai* so well that the thieves dropped their arms enchanted by the lilting music. The Panar Chief handled the instrument invoking all the eight *isai karanas*, viz.,

vārtal	-	elongation,
vadittal	-	sharpening, tapering off,

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undudal	-	pinching with different pressures,
urāl dal	-	jumping from one to another bye-passing the next one or more swaras (*varjam*),
uruttal	-	touching many swaras in the second or third tempos within specified unit of time like 'Chembai',
teruttal	-	play with clarity,
allal	-	simultaneous sounding of many swaras; and
pattadai	-	merging two swaras harmoniously.

— *Panchamarabhu,* an ancient Tamil work.

Caveat Vocalists!

Panchamarabhu, a work in tamil on musicology, **warns vocalists against -**

Loud laughter
Drug addiction
Taking gingelly, kādi and toddy and
Sexual indulgence.

Arunagiri Swamigal indicates the last specifically.

Panchamarabhu also advocates anointing a paste containing the ingredients mentioned below over the throat for voice development:

tippili	tēnmilagu
sukku	impūral
cow's milk	talaikādai
butter and	hot water.

Ayurveda practitioners may be inclined to experiment.

Classical Carnatic Music:

'It is a misnomer to call our system of music as Carnatic. Prof. P. Sambamurti rightly called it South Indian music.'

— T.S. Parthasarathy

'The contributions of kannadigas to South Indian music and musicology have earned the gratitude of all musicians and music-lovers. The epithet Karnataka Sangita has come to describe for ever the music system of South India. It is the composers of Karnataka who enunciated and stabilised by illustrative practice the canons as well as the formative and directive principles determining its aesthetic and physical structure.'

— Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan

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Whether "Carnatic" has a meaning distinct from 'Karnataka' needs to be probed. 'Carnatic' may have an extended meaning to connote entire non-Hindustani music areas and none could have confused South Indian music with Karnataka since the prime area has always been the East Coast and Tamil Nadu in particular. The term is also used to mean traditional. Catura Kallinatha has called the belt between the rivers Krishna and the Cauvery as Karnataka and it indicates the origin of the term Carnatic music (TSP in *Kumari Malar* 34-8).

Frozen Music:

Notation music is frozen music. *Manodharma* with notation is self-contradictory. It is akin to surprise inspection after notice enclosing a format of items to be looked into!

Light music with hammering beats on myriads of percussive instruments of varied sizes and designs may cure deafness. ENT experts may experiment.

— MNR

Raga Vakulabharanam: Basis For Name?:

Vakulam is Magiḷam flower, the fragrance of which induces joy *(magiḷ inidu gandham)*. Vakulam finds mention, says Kovai Iḷanchēran, in sangham literature like *Kuṟinjipāṭṭu, Paripādal, Tiṇaimālai* and *Nūtraimbadu* as well as in *Tēvāram*, etc. Vakulam, in due course, became magiḷam. The fall of this small flower from its plant is compared to the fall of a spider by poet Tiruttakka Tevar, who adds that this flower gives honey even after its fall! Tirugnanasambhandhar hails the flower as belonging to Lord Siva. When Tirumangai Alwar looks at Nammalwar, he is beset by doubts whether it was the Alwar or Lord Viṣnu he was gazing at:

"Ipperumānukku,	*'For this great man,*
Iruppidam, Tirukuruhuro?	*Residence, is it Tirukuruhur,*
Tiruppārkadalo?"	*Nammalwar's village or*
	the Lord's Oceanic bed?
"Sūdum chinnapū	*The indicative flower*
magiḷampūvō, tulasiyo?"	*worn, is it magiḷ or tulsi?"*

Vakulam or magiḷam = *mimusop indica or elangi.*
Tulsi = *sacred basil.*
Abharanam = *ornament.*

The raga is given the name of this flower. Is it because of the fragrant beauty of the raga comparable to that of the flower or for any other reason? An issue

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for research! Ancient tamils have named ragas and instruments after lands and flowers such as:

Raga *(paṇ)*	Instrument	
Mullai *paṇ*	Mullai yāḻ	(lute-like)
Kuṟinji *paṇ*	Kuṟinji yāḻ	do.
Marudam *paṇ*	Marudam yāḻ	do.
Pālai *paṇ*	Pālai yāḻ	do. (and many others).

— Kōvai Iḷanchēran

Kuṟinji Raga:

A captivating raga to which the inimitable popular song *Śiva Dīkṣa paru* bears witness. Why the raga came to be named after the kurinji flower *(strobilanthes Kunthianus)*, which flowers only once in ten years and is found only in Kodaikanal, Ootacumund and such other mountainous tracts is not clear. Once that season arrives, one witnesses a carpet of flowers over whole areas! A case for research. (Kuriṅji yaḻ or paṇ mentioned in ancient tamil works is hailed as the favourite of lovers.)

Drink - Satan's Agent! - Eminent Lives Lost!!

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?
Who hath contentions? Who hath babblings,
Who hath wounds without cause? And
Who hath redness of eyes?

Oh! What an array of questions, to me so baffling?
Who could they be so miserable, so shocking?
Lo! It is they that tarry long at the wine,
They that take to vile drinks calling them divine.

Drunk to surfeit, heart and soul sold out,
Love's labours lost, in no mood to back out,
Pauperism and poverty earned without shudder,
Drink biteth like serpent, stingeth like adder.

Many a musical life wrecked without a tear to lend.
The drunkard's ruin is the distiller's dividend.
Torch-bearer of destruction and Satan's agent!
Silence him, stop him, with measures deterrent.

Note: Several musical lives at the pinnacle of glory turned to drink and squandered their immense asset. May the lessons of their 'Boom, Booze and Doom' help in keeping the Satan away! (*Vide* page 444 of *A Garland.*) Some passages are biblical sayings.

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Unwarranted Changes:

In a lively and lucid talk on the 'Substitution of established ragas of certain kirtanas of Tyagaraja', R. Vedavalli brought out the relative beauty of the established and traditional shapes compared to the changes that have been brought about more due to convenience than any purpose. After briefly touching how *"Chatusruti Dhaivata"* has replaced *"Suddha Dhaivata"* in certain phrases in *Viriboni Varna* in *Bhairavi*, she went on to point out the changes in certain kritis of Tyagaraja. *'Nāda Tanum anisam'*, a kriti in *Chittaranjani* raga, a *janya* of *Jhankaradhvani'* (19th Melakarta) with *Suddha Nishada* has been conveniently converted into a *Janya* of *Kharaharapriya; 'Chetulara Sringara'* - a *Kharaharapriya* kirtana has been changed into *Bhairavi* (and even to *Nata Bhairavi* by some). *'Ne Morabettite'*, a kriti in *Rupavati*, to *Todi, "Rama Ni Eda"*, a *Dilipakam* kriti to *Kharaharapriya; "Prana natha Birana"* in *Soolini* to *Sankarabharanam* and the very popular kriti in *Shadvida Margini* raga *"Jnanamosaga rada"* into *Poorvi Kalyani.* Extending her point further, Vedavalli demonstrated how in certain cases the very *rupa* of the ragas has been changed by singing *"Nagumomu ganaleni"* in *Abheri* where the traditional *Shuddha dhaivata* has been replaced by *Chatusruti Dhaivata,* and *Banturitikolu* in *Hamsanadam* (a janya of *Nitimati*) where *Chatusruti Dhaivata* has been made to disappear completely. She also demonstrated the changes in *Shanmukhapriya* where *sadarana dhaivata* is being conveniently turned into *Chatusruti Dhaivata.* Conceding the inevitability of changes, she posed the question whether changes in the established traditions in music were permissible in the name of *'Jana Ranjaka'* or popular appeal.

— The *Hindu* - 26.02.95.

Shyamala Kannan Nair (under the guidance of Dr. S. Ramanathan) has pointed out (*vide Sruti* 143) that the *Karnataka Kafi* Songs *Mivalla gunadosa* and *Inta saukhya* are sung now in *Hindustan Kafi;* the *dhatus* of *Sundari Nī divya rupamu* and *Vāsudēvayani (Kalyani)* and *Sangita jnānamu* (*Dhanyasi)* are partly or wholly spurious.

Nābhi, Hṛt, Kantha, Rasana:

Śobhillu Saptaswara (Jaganmohini) of Tyagaraja records that the *saptaswaras* dazzle in the navel, heart, throat and mind. Here is a reference to that by Dr. Suresh Dey:

> 'Nada occupying the five vital positions of the human body assumes the five names respectively.
>
> In the navel, *nada* is very subtle *(atisūksma),*

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in the heart, it is subtle *(sūksma)*,
in the throat, it is developed or manifest (*pusta* or *vyakta*),
in the head, it is undeveloped or unmanifest (*apusta* or *avyakta*) and
in the mouth, it is artificial (*kritrima*).'

— The Heritage

What is Peace?

'... ... ...
'It is sweet rest in music;
And pause in sacred art;
The silence between speaking;
Between two fits of passion -
It is the calm of heart.
... ...

— Swami Vivekananda

Kuchipudi Dance - Historical Aspect:

Machupalli Kaphiyat (1502) mentions Kuchipudi dancers presenting a ballet depicting the misdeeds and corrupt rule of the chief of Siddhavatam. Abul Hasan Kutubshah of Golkonda (1672- 1681) gifted the village of Kuchipudi to the Natyacharis in 1675. (Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao).

An account of Siddhendra Yogi, the originator of the Kuchipudi style of dance, is given in *A Garland* (pages 291-2). It is interesting to note that the ballet was used to convey misdeeds of a ruler - for political ends.

Bandēmātaram - Unique, Engrossing Role:

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya authored the immortal piece which resounded through the corners of Bharat during the efflorescent period of the Independence Struggle. Doordarshan presents this song now every morn to the welcome delight of Bharatiyas. Sri Aurobindo translated it thus:

'Mother, I bow to thee!
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Cool with thy winds of delight,
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
Mother free.

'Glory of moonlight dreams,
Over thy branches and lordly streams,
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease,
Laughing low and sweet!
Mother, I kiss thy feet,
Speaker, sweet and low!
Mother, to thee I bow.'

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'The hero, the rishi, the saint, are the natural fruits of our Indian soil; and there has been no age in which they have not been born. Among the rishis of the later age, we have at last realised that we must include the name of the man who gave us the reviving mantra *Bandēmātaram* ', wrote Aurobindo. It was sung at the Varanasi Session of the Indian National Congress in 1905. Tagore expressed his opinion against the song being taken as national anthem!

Sister Nivedita:

Aurobindo came out with a new interpretation and the song found itself on the lips of every Indian!

The *Times of London* Editorial:

There is good reason to believe that it is in reality a revival of the war -cry used by the Sanyasi bands who in the early days of Warren Hastings devastated north-eastern Bengal.

George Grierson:

The dangers underlying the popularity of the song should be exposed.

Sir Henry Cotton:

Bandēmātaram is the headline of a beautiful poem written by the Bengali gentleman, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

J.D. Anderson, I.C.S.(Retd.):

No mussalman or anglo-indian can join the chant of the song. (Did he father the communal tirade against the purely national song?)

Mahatma Gandhi:

'The song is an anti-imperialist cry. As a lad, the song gripped me... enthralled me. It is enthroned in the hearts of millions. The flag and the song will live as long as the nation lives.'

Ramananda Chatterjee:

What is important is the idea and the ideal. English words like Jovial, Saturnine and Martial do not make English a language of idolators.

***The Heritage*:**

'All said and done, the role played by *Anand Math* and *Bandēmātaram* is a *fait accompli* and it has been nothing but a role sublime.'

— Source: *The Heritage.* August 1985.

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Sound Critic - Kalidasa:

'All that is old need not necessarily be good; nor is a piece of literature without charm because it is new. Sound critics favour the one or the other after scrutiny while a blockhead is guided by another's judgment.'

— Quoted by Dr. Padma Subramanyam.

Lakshana - Lakshya Harmony:

'Cleavage between theory and practice exists more because of the personal vanities of experts in each group... Ramamatya's *Swaramēḷakalānidhi* was to bridge the gap. One would very much doubt whether the intended harmony was achieved by him when one reads *Caturdaṇḍi Prakāśika* in which Venkatamakhin with irony and sarcasm writes, "All vainikas should carry on their shoulders the *melas* described by Ramamatya and dump them in a useless well."'

— Prof. R. Visweswaran, Mysore.

'If *Lakshana* is ornament to music even as chastity is ornament to women' as stated by M.S. Ramaswamy Ayyar in his introduction to *Swaramēḷa Kalānidhi,* what is *Lakshya* to music?

Is it like cosmetics (talcum powder, etc.)? What lends attraction, charm, beauty, satisfaction and fragrance could be *Lakshya* till a succeeding generation incorporates it in part or whole as modified or otherwise into the fabric of *Lakshana.* There could perhaps be nothing eternally classifiable under the one or the other.

Traditionalists:

Classical Carnatic composers were mostly traditionalists including the Bharatis of Anandatandavapuram and Ettayapuram and the renowned tamil composers, Muthu Tandavar, Marimutha Pillai, etc.

'Empiricism, that tries to separate facts from principles cannot take us farther than matter itself; and what is matter must perish with matter. Traditionalists are interested in expounding the imponderable values, the eternal and everlasting Source of Life, the "One" which is variously grasped by various philosophers. This "One" is—

the God of religion,
the Absolute of philosophers and
the Truth, Beauty and Good of artistes, poets and mystics.'

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'Traditionalists are defenders of their faith, which is a way of life and a set of practical guidance to them.'

— R. Raphael

Awareness / Interpretation of Art:

Ananda Coomaraswamy 'was alive to the fact that it was the Europeans who tried to understand Indian Art. As he puts it,

> **"Some Western minds in modern times have understood Indian Art and been more deeply moved by it than any Indian. Not one of us in all the 19th century thought of writing any book on Indian Art."**

Culture: Rajaji's Advice:

'Music should find a place in the day to day life of families. Atleast half an hour per day should be set apart for singing by elders and youngsters. No vidwan is needed for this. Dance is the best form of exercise. All should draw pleasure in participating in it. Domestic music and dance are valuable assets which elevate the standard of culture in the family.'

Indian Art:

'Indian Art is essentially idealistic, mystic, symbolic and transcendental. The artist is both priest and poet. Indian Art appeals more to the imagination and strives to realise the spirituality and abstraction of a supra-terrestrial sphere.'

— E.B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture & Painting*
(John Murray, London 1928)

Rasa:

'According to Indian Aesthetics, says Ananda Coomaraswamy, *rasa* depends on the plot and the chief *motif* and not on the character of the hero. What makes a poem great is the parabolic significance, not the literal one. **When the literal meaning overpowers the suggestive one, poetry becomes minor and the only artistic merit lies in the ornamentation of the literal sense which conveys no suggestion beyond its face meaning.**

"It is the spectator's own energy...that is the cause of the tasting, just as when children play with clay elephants"; the permanent mood---is brought to life

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as *rasa* because of the spectator's own capacity for tasting "not by the character or actions of the hero to be imitated...nor by the deliberate ordering of the work to that end..." Aesthetic experience is thus accessible to those competent...Competence depends 'on purity or singleness *(satva)* of heart and on an inner character *(antaradharma)* or habit of obedience *(anusila)*...'

R. Raphael's *Ananda Coomaraswamy*

* * *

Padams & Javalis:

Padams and *javalis* thrive on *sriñgāra.* While the former deals with *madhura bhakti* (dignified love) and compositions are scholarly, the latter is often erotic and philosophical significance is minimal. Here is what Ananda Coomaraswamy says:

> "If the artist is to represent the eternal realities, he must have known them as they are. In other words, an act of imagination in which the idea to be represented is first clothed in an imitable form must have preceded the operation..."

How far poets know these realities is for conjecture. 'Their imitations are not of the originals, but are only copies of copies. If a poet cannot imitate eternal realities but only the vagaries of human character, there can be no place for him in an ideal society, however true or intriguing his representations may be.'

Ponder on these:

i. Need there be so many bouts of swara singing smacking of barren pedantry?

ii. Would not more halts and *karvais* on *jiva swaras* mounted on sinuous movements in *raga alapana* enhance the merit of concerts?

— K.S. Mahadevan

Dance Music:

There could be music without dance but not the reverse. The earliest compositions for dance were the Dhruva songs described in *Natya Sastra* of Bharata. *Sangita Ratnakara* of Sarngadeva cites *prabandhas* used for dance recitals. The author of *Silappadikaram,* Ilango appeared to be familiar with

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Bharata's work. Bharatanatyam attained its zenith of glory during the Nayak-Maratha rule at Tanjore, the Tanjore Quartette placing the format-sequence on solid foundation. Evolution of dance music followed on the dance traditions, languages in vogue and religious and other influences.

— T.S. Parthasarathy at Fine Arts Foundation on September 23, 1988

The knew not to receive

'In the late eighties the former Prime Minister of India, Sri Rajiv Gandhi, who had very high regard for the Sadasivams (T. Sadasivam and Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi) and who once wrote in one of his letters to Sri Sadasivam, "Srimathi Subbulakshmi is a treasure of the country and she must be preserved at any cost", sent a communication to the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru MGR, that he must lookout for a good and decent house to be bought in her name.

The Sadasivams politely declined the affectionate offer made with so much concern and love by people who counted. MGR then asked in deep concern, 'why?' While the Sadasivams were emotionally choked, their Secretary explained to him that they both have always been at the giving end for so many decades and pleaded not to put them at the receiving end at the fag end of their lives.'

— from *A Life of fulfilment*

* * *

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PART III - D

INTERESTING INCIDENTS & NOTES

Speed

'Speed has sounded the death-knell of some eloquent-speaking, traditional old instruments such as the Veena, the Sur Bahar, Sur Singhar, Dilruba and Pakhawaj. At present the harmonium is doing its best to oust the most comprehensive and the most manoeuvrable instrument, the Sarangi in the North. Convenience rather than artistic propriety guides the musician. Consumer being the King, the audiences' dictat virtually rules the stage and decides who shall perform. Their untutored whims have made fake stars in plenty and want them alone on the stage.'

— P. Wadhera.

* * *

Tambur

"Dandigillāda hādu, hendirillāda manevārte
Talechodēda mundadantakku Sarvajna." — *Poet Sarvajna*

(Music without dandi, i.e. tambur or brhma veena and home without a wife is but a trunk without head!)

— Quoted by Vainika C.K.Shankara Narayana Rau in his book Veena

Drone is vital to manodharmic music. Tambur is yielding primacy to sruti-box owing to constraints in transport.

* * * *

Autobiographic Endeavours
The Indian View

"Did Vyasa, Vasistha or Valmiki make any personal jottings, leave behind any private paper or maintain any diary? Who am I before these great sages? Man must do his duty and disappear... After I pass away, no one need remember me."

— Chakravarti Rajagopalachari to T. Sadasivam
(in *A Life of Fulfilment*)

* * * * *

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Oh! that *'GUMKA'* and *'DEKA'* !!

Vimalakutti, M.Sc., (Percussion) gave the broadest of smiles when asked whether she liked the smart, chubby Murali whose consent was taken for granted by his parents and they went on discussing the marriage date. When casually their attention fell on him, they were shocked to see his 'castor-oily' face and morose looks and took him aside:

'Murali dear, shall we conclude?'
'Dad, please allow me time to consider.'
'Time? Where is the need, boy? She is so nice...'
'Dad, if you are so anxious, tell them, "I am not interested".

It was Pearl Harbour! The distract parents and their daughters patted him with cajoling solicitude:

'Murali dear, we could not ever dream of such an alliance.'

'Dad...I'm afraid of her.'

'Afraid! You donkey, are you bluffing? Such a cultured, warm-hearted kid, she is and...'

'Mom, dad doesn't understand. I am the one to face her strong arms every moment of my life.'

(He passes his palm softly over his face as if he has scores of sores having just retired from a bout in the ring like a wrestler.)

'Mom, when she did the "*gumka*" and the "*deka*", I felt their impact all over my face! Can't stand or suffer them!... Please drop it!...'

(His arms frequently wipe off his face softly as if soothing the sores!)

(Vimalakutti enters.)

'Mummy, excuse me. My parents wish me to mention that whatever be your terms, they would accept, Please have no misgivings on any account.'

(She turns back to go.)

'Madam, can I have a word with you! (As she nears) madam, be pleased to convey to your parents... (halts, falters to the utter dismay and discomfiture of his parents, etc.), sorry madam, just mention that my parents would take no dowry but only Vimlakutti as daughter-in-law. Will you please.'

(The parents look at each other confounded and intrigued unable to guess what it was.)

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'Madam, please also tell them that I am personally afraid of your mrdangam.'

'Sir, if you dislike it, I would take to tabla...'

'Worse, God, it is worse...', he shouts.

'Kanjira?'

'God, pray help me. 'I feel as if you hold me fast and firm by my neck with your left hand and thrash me by the right!'

'Sir (in whispers). I shall stop my percussion if you so desire. I like all of you and my parents too'

'No Vimla, I only want an assurance that you, at any time in anger or distrust, will not direct your trained hands at me!'

(Smiles and winks at her: the deer runs out.)

'You donkey, you had cruelly given *gumkas* and *dekas* to all of us!'; his sister gave him a hefty pat.

(Note: Probably this fear-complex is a reason for fewer lady-percussionists even in this era of women in music!)

Diet & Music :

'Avāhamē annapānē sarvadā' — *Taittiriyōpaniṣad*

God takes those whom He loves young; so goes the saying. But it is seen that penance and poverty too had taken a heavy toll of the lives of maestros in the past. Poochi (Ramnad) Srinivasa Ayyangar was a glutton but he lived upto his fifty-second year only. Was his life cut off due to over-eating?

Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar was absolutely frugal in his food though he could command a royal table always. He sacrificed his food to maintain his unexcelled divine voice. And he died in his forty - ninth year! Patnam Subramania Ayyar was not a votary of Maha's starvation diet. Yet he surrendered his earthly coil in his fifty-seventh year itself. Mahakavi Subramania Bharati lived just for thirty-nine years. These great men led spotless lives and yet were not blessed with a longer span of life and it was all a national loss. The list is much longer in fact.

Could medical research unfold a suitable diet for vocalists and instrumentalists!

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Puranānūru speaks of a good singer singing out of tune as he had taken a hefty meal. *Marudappaṇ* and *Sevvaḷ̤ipaṇ* were reportedly sung in mornings and evenings respectively in ancient times. *Sevvaḷ̤ipaṇ* and *Vilaripaṇ* were played on instrument yāḷ̤ by Madhavi according to *Silappadikaram.* Nalli, chieftain ruling over Kandiram, patronised musicians. Poet Vaṇparanar in his song accused him that tradition had been violated because of his liberal feasts, as Panars (musicians) had forgotten the norms and were singing *Marudapaṇ* in evenings and *Sevvaḷ̤ipaṇ* in mornings! This is another indication to highlight the presumption that a **loaded stomach dulls wits.**

— Dr. U.Ve.Sā in *Ninaivu Manjari*

'A diet of instant noodles fuels China's Zhan Xugang to three world records and the Atlanta Olympic gold medal in the 70 kg weightlifting. Zhan predicted how the Chinese camp had predicted the athletes' village food would not be to their taste and shipped a container-load of instant noodles'

Musicians have their individual standards of diets before and after concerts. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar was at one extreme. Ayurvedic treatises are reputed to contain guidelines for ensuring sweet voice. Premier institutions and Artistes' associations can constitute a competent committee of dieticians to recommend a standard diet conducive to the artistes' professional advancement. Several doctors themselves are very good musicians and would be glad to associate themselves in this project.

Tyagaraja *Ārādhana:*

Strange Suggestion! A knowledgeable authority in music suggested a combined *ārādhana* and segregating amateurs from professionals. It is not a laudable suggestion to promote either the celebrations vital to the growth of art or the elevation of amateurs. Tyagaraja composed songs not to promote lure of money but for *atma tṛpti,* enlightenment and ennoblement of lay-rasikas, amateur musicians and all else. The joyous countenance of young participants at *ārādhana* reveal their *shraddha* in joining the *shrāddha.* May there be hundreds of *ārādhanas* in far-flung areas from Cleveland to Canberra to enable all to participate - a hundred flowers to bloom!

Insulting Poser?

The vidwān was an adept not only in music but also in confounding the man opposite. The zamindar who hosted his concert requested him to do *kalpana*

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swara. The Vidwan was singing the song of Patnam Subramania Ayyar, *Abhimānamen*.

> Vidwan: Shall I do it for *abhimāna* or for *annavastra* (sing for love or for belly)?

Zamindar, stung to the quick, felt insulted. Cleverly suppressing his mischievous query, he clarified:

> 'Please do not mistake me. The first word is in *pallavi* and the second is in *charanam*. I just wanted to know which you preferred.'

Would it have pleased the good host?

Bhakti Promotes Art :

Till recently, *Kālakṣēpams* drew immense crowds as people liked to hear stories and songs propounding *bhakti*. At concerts, the *bhakti* element in songs attract universal attention. Bhaktas - devotees - heard music as ancillary to *bhakti* and became music-conscious and vice versa. Bhajans were another factor which very greatly impressed and influenced rural and urban folks. Music has been the beneficiary. Music was the handmaid of religion always. Tyagaraja worships music as divine in many songs. This coparcenary between *bhakti* and music benefitted both.

Bhajan:

'Has two syllables: *Bha* donotes *bhāva* and *Jan* denotes people. Feeling or emotion projected by the singer should be intense and soul-stirring to inculcate devotion and carry people closer to God.

Sruti is *Paramātma* and the singer is *jīvātma*. Even as the singer's voice blends with and merges in the *sruti*, the singer as *adwaitin* has to merge in and get the feel of the *Paramātma.'*

Music is Supreme:

'Of the various *yōgas*, paths or meditation in the realisation of God, music is a synthesis. It also enjoys the unique privilege of defying the fundamental spiritual doctrine, that is, that which is pleasant is not good and that which is good is not necessarily pleasant. Only in music, one finds the sole exception to the rule. Real music is both pleasant and good, that is, *Prēya* and *Śrēya*, as it is in the terminology of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*'

— Anil Baran Ganguli in *'Fine Arts in Ancient India'*.

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Ghanam:

Ghanam Bobbili Kesavayya, Ghanam Krishna Ayyar, Paidala Gurumurti Sastri and Gururayacharyulu are hailed as reputed ghana vidwans.

> 'Exposition of raga in *madhyamakala* using the syllabus *ta* and *na* is *Tana.* When *tanam* is performed in *durita kala* or the next faster tempo, it is *ghanam.* The chief feature of *ghanam* style is that *Nada* is properly reinforced to manifest itself with a *humkara dhvani* while doing the permutation and combination of *swaras* constituting beautiful *tana* patterns.
>
> Robust constitution, unusual stamina, vast musical imagination, flexible, steady voice and sense of dedication are vital.'
>
> — Dr. S. Sita.

Uru Era Tiru Erum :

In the '*Garland's*, we have seen how eminent musicians like Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar, Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu and Alathur Brothers had subjected themselves to rigorous practice and training which find ample recognition and emphasis in scriptures and is extolled as meritorious. The dictum cited as heading affirms the same. Vidwat or blessedness is enhanced and enriched proportionate to the purity and intensity of practice.

Prof. S.R. Janakiraman States :

> i. Muthuswami Dikshitar was first to use the name *Madhyamavati;* earlier it was *Madhyamādi (Madhyama Ādi).*
>
> ii. Varnam is *lakshana grantha.*
>
> iii. Tyagaraja brought out the soul of *Saṅgraha Chūḍāmaṇi.* Who guided whom is irrelevant.
>
> — (At Music Academy, Madras on December 24, 1994)

Exaggeration Is The Soul:

'Hindu ornamentation is distinguishable by its lavish exaggeration and an immense abundance of detail.... dominant trait of the Hindu', says Gustave La Boon.

Excessive definition, minute categorisation, raga-tala structures, etc. amply support the observation. For exaggeration, here is an observation on sculpture:

> 'The steatopygous figurines of goddesses - sexy, curved shoulders, padded hips and breasts, high busts, small waists, full hips....'

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Hindustani Music - A Clarification:

'Ragas are selected keeping in mind the time of rendition-

Lalit, Bairagi	Early morning.
Ahir, Bairav	Morning.
Bimplas	Four in the evening.
Maduvanti, Yaman Kalyan	Six in the evening.
Kalyan	Night.

'If *Behag, Desh, Dwijavanti,* etc. have been brought into Carnatic system, *Vachaspati, Kirvani, Charukesi, Narayani, Abhogi, Simhendramadhyamam, Latangi,* etc., have been taken to Hindustani. But the modes of rendition differ much.'

'Clarity and *sruti-suddham* are *sine quo non* in Hindustani music.'

Agra gharānā lays emphasis on laya;
Gwalior gharānā emphasis is on sweet rendition and sahitya;
Patiala gharāna is based on emotional rendition and
Kirāna gharāna gives prominence to alapana.'

'Like the 72 *melakarta ragas* in Carnatic system, Hindustani has 10 *thāts.*'

— Lakshmi Shankar to Maharajapuram Santanam (*MVT Souvenir* 1988)

Sita, A Master Composer? No, says Kambar:

Oriental weeping has been known the world over for its -

Intensity and pathos
Duration and *Kālapramāna,*
Musical structures and variety and
Instant compositional eloquence and
Mastery and *manodharmic* elegance.

The dirge may be with genuine tears of sorrowing kith and kin or without, the latter occasioning the idiom *'En kaḍanukkāha azharē'* (why weep for just a paisa or for show?). Funeral mourning is monopolised by women. Sagacity in choosing apt anecdotes and characteristics from the life of the deceased, enlivening the lyric with imaginary or notional betrayal of the family by the deceased in winding up his show on this planet add spice and commands the notice of the lyric-conscious! Spot delineation of the *sahitya* was a remarkable asset and hundreds excelled in it.

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But Sita, the divine spouse of Rama, could not boast of such a mastery! The news of the death of Emperor Dasaratha is conveyed to Rama and her. There is genuine sorrow and Sita weeps. Kavi Chakravarti Kambar records:

'Pannenum kiḷaviyāḷ
Panni ēnguvāḷ.'

There is raga in her weeping *(paṇ)*. But she lacks mastery in weaving out appropriate lyric delineating her sorrow. The dirge lacks lyrical support. Result? She repeats the same lyric over and over! The mastery of the composer is seen here in recording in just four words

Sita's intense grief,
Sita's continuing grief as seen from her weeping for long,
Sita's mastery in rāga (music) and
her inadequacy in composing!

She had to repeat the same phrase *ad infinitum* as if for nṛtya.

— Source: Ma.Po. Sivagnana Gramani
Amudha Surabhi 7/95.

On this, Ku. Sa. Venkataraman, a tamil scholar, writes that Sita could not be judged on the basis of the above since she had burst out with vehemence in about sixteen *viruttams* in *Kamba Ramayana* when Ravana threatened to kill (Māya) Janaka, her father. It is relevant to mention, says he, that sixteen *viruttams* describe Rama's sorrow as against only three of Sita's when Dasaratha's death was announced but sixteen *viruttams* poured out when **her** father Janaka's life was threatened! However the issue here is ability to compose.

Tyagaraja Kriti Debased?

'I surrender body and soul to Lord Sankara, whose body is *nāda.* Often I worship Sankara, who confers joy and who is the essence of *Sāma Vēda...'*, sang the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru in *Nāda Tanumaniśam (Chittaranjani)*. At the birthday celebrations of Sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar on April 7, 1995, Charumati Ramachandran sang the kriti modifying the lyric thus:

'Nāda tanumaniśam, Ravi Shankaram
Namāmi mē manasā śirasā'.

Ramakrpa wrote that Tyagaraja never indulged in *narastuti* but Charumati Ramachandran flouted it exercising artistic indulgence and that she might even sing next *'Rāmachandran, pārayāmi'* (please look at me) - *Sruti* 5/95 - corruptive use of *Ramachandram Bhāvayāmi* (*Vasanta*) of Dikshitar!

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Tyagaraja, of course, has ruled, 'should one wish to dance or act, it should be on Rama; if one wishes to sing, it should be so only on Rama' — *Nī vaṇṭi daivamu nē gāna (Bhairavi).*

Unwarranted:

Hamsadhwani, a prominent sabha, requests artistes to announce the names of rāgas for the benefit of listeners. 'One of the Hyderabad Brothers did not like this. He allegedly told the audience, "Those who do not know even this have no business to attend the performances".

It was indeed unwarranted, writes a rasika from Hyderabad in *Sruti.*

Sahitya Mispronounced!

> 'Hatō Hanumatārāmah, Sita harṣam upāgatā rudanti rākṣasāḥ sarvē hā hā rāmo hatō hataḥ.'
>
> (Hanuman has killed Rama; Sita is delighted; the Rāksasas delight too.)

This sanskrit *udbhaṭa-sloka* is palpably absurd. The error is rectified by detecting a simple euphonic combination in two places. The word is *arāma* (garden) and not Rāma. When rectified, it just means that Hanuman destroyed the garden. Sita is delighted; Rakṣasas cry.'

— Anil Baran Gunguly

The Paramacharya and authorities in music have been insisting on correct pronunciation of *sahitya* to avoid such mischiefs. Commenting on authentic presentation of bharatanatyam, S. Sarada writes, 'There is a common misconception that the kirtana *Yāro, ivar, yāro* is Sita singing on Rama, while in reality it is Rama who sings on Sita'.

This is a vexed question since much of the concert-content is in languages with which many of the artistes are not fully conversant. There is *padacchedam,* wrong emphasis and pronunciation, etc. which are held out by knowledgeable authorities and lakshanakaras as serioud flaws.

> **'Poetry is usually considered the most local of all arts. Painting, sculpture, architecture and music can be enjoyed by all who see or hear. But language, especially the language of poetry, is a different matter. Poetry, it might seem, separates people instead of uniting them!... To enjoy poetry belonging to another language is to enjoy an understanding of the people to whom that language belongs, an understanding we can get in no other way...'**
>
> **(T.S. Eliot)**

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The same applies to *sahitya* in different languages which are sung by musicians, strangers to one or more of them!

Rāgamālika On Ariyakudi:

A rare composition by Balakrishna Sastrigal, the eminent kālakṣēpa artiste. This was tuned by K.V. Narayanaswami, prime disciple of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar.

Point To Point:

A sort of impatience. An anxiety to race to the finish. This does not allow of spacing of *ālāpana*, etc. Once it starts, it is a marathon to the finish! It is the result of the anxiety to pour out all *sanchāras* and *saṅgatis*. Tirupparkadal S. Viraraghavan and some such seniors have this style.

Relative Maturity!

Rasika: 'Your performance today was marvellous. I notice positive maturity...'

Vidwan: 'Sir, I have been singing so for the last decade and over. Your sudden appreciation today shows that you have after all attained maturity now!'

Trend:

'...Objection was only to make the concert stellar even at the cost of musical niceties. Their instinct is fascinated to pressure tactics to impart vibrancy. *Rāga ālāpana sanchāras* are woven around flashy flights. There is more of frenzy than finesse...'

— DVV in the '*Hindu*'.

Sakota Yāḷ (Harp among ancient Tamils):

Sakota yāḷ mentioned prominently in ancient tamil treatises was actually seen played upon just about five hundred years back by a French traveller to India at Madurai and Kaveripoompattinam as seen from a note in the Art Museum at Paris. The traveller had met several artistes who were knowledgeable in 12000 ragas by resort to *Tāra Takkam (Sruti Bhēdam)*.

— Mi. Pa. Somu.

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Invent One More Swara!

The Maharaja of Mysore could not come. The Durbar-Bakshi inaugurated the Tyagaraja Aradhana instead at Mysore. He made a fervent speech and pointedly outlined the line of activity for future:

> 'Tyagaraja was a great man. But our vidwans are singing the same old seven swaras! They should work hard and concentrate on inventing at least the eighth swara!'
>
> — B.V.K. Sastri

Once a bhakshi, always a bhakshi!

Leonardo Da Vinci's Death:

He was at the height of his musical success. He bore immense passion for an Italian lady who reciprocated it. But when he 'took to boasting about the lady's favours, she revenged herself by presenting him with a cup of poisoned chocolate which he drank and died'! (S.J.C.)

Poet Ambikapati, son of Kambar, erred in the count of his compositions by one and had to lose his right to live and marry the princess by that miserable margin. It was tragic!

Origin Of Violin: Another View:

'Violin entered Madras area after 1820 but it came first to Mysore by the middle of the 18th century through the French. A wooden frieze in the temple car at Srirangapatnam depicts a woman playing on a violin. By 1860 Kollegal Narayanaswamy, Malavalli Subbanna and Peripatna Narayanaswamy became adepts.'

— R.R. Keshavamurty in *Sruti.*

Mṛdangam:

'Who is that devotee who delights You with noble *sahitya, swara suddha* rendition with mṛdangam to accompany', queries Tyagaraja in *Sogasugā mṛdanga tālamu (Sriranjani).* All cannot hope to play on mridangam pleasing God and man. The bard says:

> *'Maddala tālagatula teliyakane madincuṭa sukhamā?'*
> (Will there be *sukham* if one were to beat the mṛdangam without knowing the *talagati* ?)

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Umayalpuram Sivaraman, the percussion maestro, who has been doing research, said at the Music Academy during a demonstration in December, 1995:

'Weight or length of mṛdangam is irrelevant;
Weight and depth of play alone is relevant.'
'"Lesser the weight, the better", doctors advise.
It applies to mṛdangam too.'

'Do not beat mṛdangam; it harms the ear too.
Play on it; it soothes and gladdens.'

'If technical skill and *manodharma* (innovation) are rich,
art is rich and it blossoms.'

Inspiration:

'Among all peoples, indeed, one of the most fruitful springs of poetic inspiration is the longing to return from exile whether it be -

to the bosom of one's own land, or
to the loved one's breast, or
to the bosom of God.

"It is the sorrow of separation", says Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, "that ever melts and flows in song through my poet's heart." And of the three types of exile, that which India more than any other land has felt in the deep recesses of her soul, is the exile from God, the exile from that which is eternal... This nostalgia, this homesickness, has been expressed with amazing depth and passion....'

— Nicol Macnicol based on
Poems by Indian Women.

'... Sufis, or muslim mystics believed in the efficacy of music as a means of elevating the soul and as an aid to spiritual progress. This attitude became more pronounced when muslims settling in India found their Hindu countrymen very fond of music... music became popular among muslims in India. The liking which the Sufis had for music started the custom of semi-religious congregations assembling to hear songs of professional singers *(Qawwals);* the tunes are called *Qawwali.*'

— Sir Abdul Qadir at the Royal Society of
Arts on December 13, 1935.

Guru Bhakti: Unique Legacy:

Ayodha Dowmiyar ran a gurukula on the banks of the Ganges. Upamanyu, son of Vyāghṛapāda, was among his disciples and he was very intelligent and

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a symbol of virtuous *guru bhakti.* One day the guru asked him to take the cattle for grazing and on several days, he subjected him to severe trials. He bore through them all with equanimity and came out unscathed. In appreciation of it all, he was blest with eyes capable of delving into the past and foreseeing the future apart from seeing the present. What has this to do with musicians?

To mention names is not fair, Some of the elder musicians, who have secured name, fame and image have tended cattle, **washed the clothes of their gurus and their wives,** etc. as part of their gurukula. They reached the pinnacle of glory. Mysore Vasudevacharya, K.V. Narayanaswami and other seniors could vouch for this. Such disciples have made an indelible mark in the field of music and languages, which is the envy of others. The fact is that with absolute *guru bhakti* they got dissolved in and absorbed by the knowledge, skill, style, prowess and lives of the masters and had become one with them!

Gurus enjoyed that stature and disciples held fast to that discipline. Here is what the renowned Mysore Vasudevacharya has recorded:

> "My share of the duties was to wash Guruji's (Patnam Subramania Ayyar's) and his wife's clothes in the river (at Tiruvaiyaru), to wash the copper pots and store drinking water in them, to wash pūja utensils, to make the bed for guruji and press his feet till he fell asleep. Occasionally I had to go with Kempegowda (another disciple) to take cattle for grazing. Guruji had not commenced teaching me though months had gone by! I was to get up and provide tambura sruti for his *sadhaka,* to listen attentively when he taught Parameswariah (yet another disciple), to be with Guruji when he composed and go with him for concerts."

This is vexatious! Disciple is not a menial nor is he a slave and is not meant to do such detestable domestic works! By any stretch of imagination, could any of these (except perhaps providing the drone) be considered part of a disciple's duties? Here is what the Mysore veteran has recorded:

> "Vasu, don't think I am not aware of your desire to learn. Do not feel that you have spent all your time in vain. The benefit of careful and constant listening can hardly be exaggerated."

Can such tenderness be a substitute for lessons? Patnam Subramania Ayyar continued:

> **'Vasu, I have now taken you around the corridors of the temple (of music). All that remains to be done is to take you to the**

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sanctum santorum **and show you the mūla vigraha. That I will do tomorrow!'**

Mysore Vasudevacharya rose up and blossomed into an alround veteran!!

Perhaps one may he tempted to ask, 'Where is a guru like Patnam, or a disciple like Vasu or a place like Tiruvaiyaru to enact all these?'.

Unmusical Jealousy:

This historic event indicates the extent to which jealous vandalism could go:

'O man, whosoever thou art,
From wheresoever thou comest,
I am Cyrus (529 B.C.) who founded the
Empire of the Persians.
Grudge me not this little earth that covers my body.'

This tomb was visited by Alexander in 324 B.C. and was found rifled and the inscriptions eraced. Alexander, who died the next year, was sorely moved recalling the uncertainty of life and vicissitudes of things.'

— WTF Castle in *The Syrian Pageant*

I deliberately avoid the present Carnatic forum. *Another Garland* (pages 44-48) brought to focus the cancerous element of jealousy among musicians. How it poisons public mind is reflected in this case from the West:

Antonio Salieri (1750-1825), the Italian Composer, was jealous of and bitterly opposed to Mozart and in consequence was suspected of having poisoned him. Salieri never prospered and died poor. At his death-bed, he declared:

'I assure that there is no grain of truth
in the report that I had poisoned Mozart.
Let the world know that Salieri on his
death-bed declared this.'

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), French composer, is credited with a bitter tongue which would not relish good in others.

'He professed to know nothing of Handel's music;
He laughed Haydn to scorn as a pedantic old baby in music;
Mozart fared still worse with him;
Cherubini he hardly cared to speak of and
He could not be persuaded to hear Mendelssohn's Elijah'.

— (FJG)

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Envy haunted young, talented Henriette Sontag. Her worst vindictive critic was Amalie Steininger. Time passed by. Sontag was charmed by the tender voice of a child who was leading a woman. Queried, the child said that it was its mother, once famous but now blind, discarded and begging and gave her name as Steininger! 'Sontag made a collection on the spot and next day went with an oculist. It was too late!'

— Source: Musicians' Wit.

Performance After Long Drought:

Sergei Bubka holds the world record for pole vault with 6.15 metres. In about two years (1984-85), he had set 35 world records. The champion said on January 28, 1996:

> 'The first competition after a long period off is always tough. The speed is faster, the pole is harder. It seems like you're starting all over again.'

This is true of any art or game. Veterans summoned to grace important occasions and festivals do feel out of sorts till they settle down, regain and feel the warmth of their old performing days. They do feel uncomfortable in avoidably making the rasikas suffer their initial efforts at concerts. Of course, they have the right to expect it!

Any Reason?

Manu was not in favour of householders taking to dance or music—vocal or instrumental. Chanakya is said to have just tolerated musicians and actors.

Why? To avoid duplicity, fanning up fanaticism, demoralisation?

Saptaswaras! - An Attribute Of Sarojini Naidu's Poem:

The high poetical and political image of Sarojini Naidu is well known. How promptly and gracefully she conceded, 'I have already done it', when after a preview of M.S. Subbulakshmi's film, Meera, Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar enquired of her, 'Now, do you surrender the title the "Nightingale of India?" This has been mentioned in *A Garland* (page 329)

"*The Queen's Rival*" is a beautiful poem of Sarojini Naidu. Queen Gulnar is dissatisfied with the fact that she has no rival in her beauteous charm!

> 'Queen Gulnar sighed like a murmuring rose:

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"Give me a rival, O King Feroz".

A rival she wants, as she tires of her beauty! What a charming conception!!

'Caesar says, and it is done', said the Roman. Even so, King Feroz affirms, 'Let thy mouth speak and my life be spent to clear the sky of discontent, your least desire'. He directs his Chief Vizier to secure 'seven beautiful brides' ere next morn. And the Vizier leads in the seven new moons, fair lamps, bright petals of Beauty's flower. All of no avail. Gulnar is not happy!

Gulnar's daughter just two years' old runs to her knee. The Queen like a tremulous rose laughs and says,

'Here is my rival, O King Feroz!'

The seven damsels brought in by the Vizier are like the individual swaras - *Shadja... Nishada* etc. Viewed individually, each does not and could not cast the spell of glamorous beauty lacking the *raga swarūpa*.. Queen Gulnar is the *sampurna raga* (with all the seven *swaras* in *arohana* and in *avarohana*). There is *rakti* in that raga. She is the most popular of *melakarta ragas* and her child is the most popular *janya raga*! That satisfies since both enjoy the composite and comprehensive lilting appeal of all the swaras!

Strange Raga Names : Specimen:

Ravanapriya	:	Janya of 8. *Hanumatodi*
Nammalwar	:	Janya of 62 Risabhapriya
Nappinnaipriya	:	Janya of 50 *Namanarayani*
Baroda	:	Janya of 29 *Dhirasankarabharanam*
Āduthuraiyan (my birth place)	:	Janya of 23 *Gowrimanohari*
Sariga (*swarasthana*)	:	Janya of 5 *Manavati*
Auvaipriya	:	Janya of 56 *Shanmukhapriya*

Karnataka or Kannada finds part of numerous raga names quite significantly.

Purvakannada	(5)	*Kannada sourashtram*	(10)
Suddha kannada	(16)	*Vasanta kannada*	(10)
Kannada mallaru	(20)	*Karnataka Devagandhari*	(21)
Kannada panchamam	(26)	and a host of others.	

— *Pudiya Ragangal*

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Who Unearthed *Tevaram* Manuscripts: Two Views:

The devotional songs of Appar, Sundarar and Gnanasambandar are together called *Tevaram*, now in wide use. They were found hidden in the secret vaults of the Chidambaram temple. Only 790 out of 8250 or so were salvaged. It is said that Rajaraja Abhayakulasekharan, the Chola king with the help of Nambiyandar Nambi unearthed them and got them tuned by Padiniar of Thiruverukkathampuliyur, a nearby village of Panars, a musical sect.

Abhayakulasekharan was Aditta Cholan I and his son was Parantaka Cholan according to Prof. Vellaivarananar in *Panniru Tirumuṛai Varalāru* and Prof. T.V. Sadasiva Pandarathar in *Later Cholas - Pirkala Cholar Varalaru.*

On the other hand, Abhayakulasekharan is identified with Rajaraja Cholan I (985-1013) by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri in his '*Cholas*' and by L. Ulaganatha Pillai in his '*Rajaraja Cholan*'. Evidently an issue before researchers!

— T.A. Thanapandian

Satire & *Nindastuti:*

Satire is ridicule of congenital, acquired or apparent vices and follies of a person or a society. Cartoons of Shankar, Keshav, etc. serve the same ends. Satire of a gentle form (Horatian satire) or of harsh form (Juvenalian satire) is resorted to bring home the folly in a pungent and readily assimilable form.

> 'Satire is born of the instinct to protest and protest becomes art.'
>
> — Arthur Pollard
>
> 'The true end of satire is the amendment of vices.'
>
> — Dryden & Defoe
>
> 'A satirist is abnormally sensitive to the gap between what might be and what is.'
>
> — James Sutherland

Nindastuti is not satire as thus conceived. It is nobler, devotional in concept, content and appeal. It is not to protest, object or complain in reality though ostensibly it appears so. Genuine love and devotion, the enormity of passion which seeks to find expression and the unsatiated urge to extol and laud find the accepted, normal, serene expressions too dull, matter of fact to convey the composer's or actor's intensity of pent-up feelings surging to burst out. This leads to *nindastuti. Nindastuti* has the added advantage of absorbing appeal and arresting tone to involve the audience since a joke or a satire engages and elicits appreciation instantaneously.

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'Have You run away to Tirupati mountain unable to stand the pestering devotees?

Have you taken shelter in the Island of Srirangam to keep off devotees?

Did you approach Emperor Bali for the land anticipating devotees coming up abegging for land-gifts? Etc.'

— *Sita Nayaka (Ritigaula)* of Tyagaraja

'What is the secret of Your limping and keeping a leg uplifted always, Mr.?'

— *Ennēramum oru kālaittūkki (Todi)* of Marimutha Pillai

'How could you choose for a spouse this person with many a handicap', Pillai addresses apparently in a lighter vein the Devi for taking Siva as spouse!

Marimutha Pillai in *Enna Kāriattukkinda Pēyandi*

'How can one expect compassion from Siva who consumes poison (Nilakantha), kills Kiratāka and lives on icy waters?'

— Pallavi Doraiswami Ayyar in his *Sankarabharanam kriti*

Gopalakrishna Bharati, Vedanayakam Pillai and other composers have given delightful pieces in *nindastuti.*

King Kulottunga's Work Schedule:

'Kalaiyinōḍum, kavivānar kaviyinōḍum,
Isaiyinōḍum, kāḍal mādar
Mulaiyinōḍum, Manu nītiyinōḍum,
Maraiyinōḍum, poḷudu pōkki...'

— *Kalingathu Parani* quoted by M.M. Ismail, Former Chief Justice, Madras High Court.

(He spent his time on arts, poetry, music, scriptures, administration of justice and —(what?—on breasts of loved women.)

The wide coverage and dispersal of his time may be noted. Tiruttakka Thevar has recorded that **music and dance are but food for passion.**

Crash Course:

America-born Narain was sent to Bharat from USA to undergo a crash course in Indian music. The learned teacher started with explaining raga.

'Narain, raga is a melody-mould enjoying a *swarūpa* and individuality...'

'Sir, how to remember the word?'

'Take Ra from Radhika and Ga from Gayatri. You have it.'

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'I would love to marry one of them before return Sir.'

'Well, marry raga first; we shall trace out and settle Radhika or Gayatri later.'

'Can I get them both, Sir?'

'No, there will be *apaswara,* boy!'

Ministers should perforce undergo a condensed course in music and percussion before taking over so that they could learn how and where to press or beat, with what intensity, frequency, etc. and where to allow time and how to synchronise it with the beat so that the training and experience will stand them in good stead in dealing with parties.

Connoisseurs: Early Dramatic Panorama:

'Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar founded the Suguna Vilasa Sabha in 1891 inspired by the dramas of Sarasa Vinodhini Sabha and its star advocate-actor, Bellary Krishnamacharlu. Mudaliar was assisted by two brilliant legal luminaries, V.V. Srinivasa Ayyangar and V.C. Gopalaratnam. Actors included celebrities like Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer (Law Member, Government of India), Sir R.K. Shanmugham Chetty (later Union Minister) and the renowned Parliamentarian-connoisseur of arts, S. Satyamurti. No wonder the Sabha became the cynosure of all eyes and Mudaliar and his troupe travelled all over India and Far East staging his tamil plays.'

— Randor Guy in the *Heritage*

The actors mostly amature were drawn from the cream of the top elitist society who gave their all for the resuscitation of the stage and music.

Drama in tamil-speaking areas has a hoary antiquity having been treated as one of the three prime segments of the language along with prose and music. *Teru-koothu* was a common phenomenon in rural areas during festivals and post-harvest *melas.* In fact, in my village, transplantation of paddy was never undertaken without the *teru-koothu* mostly performed by artistes from Tiruppampuram, etc. Literature abounds with information as much on dramas as on music.

Perhaps in the middle ages, drama had gone into comparative oblivion since evidence of its continuance is wanting. T.P. Krishnaswamy Pavalar contributed to the renaissance with patriotic pieces like *Kadarin Vetri* (Success of hand-spun

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khadi) and *Desiya Kodi* (National Flag) synchronising with the upsurge in the patriotic struggle for freedom. M. Kandaswami Mudaliar with *Chandrakanta* and *Rajambal,* both hits, was a celebrity of lavish popularity. T.K.S. Brothers, C. Kanniah, Nawab Rajamanickam, Madurai Original Boys, Secretariat troupe and many others took the dramatic art to its pinnacle of glory and acme of excellence.

Profuse Carnatic Classical music was the mainstay and attraction and the period saw stalwarts like S.G. Kittappa, M.R. Krishnamurti, M.K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar, P.U. Chinnappa, S.V. Subbiah Bhagavatar, T.R. Mahalingam and a host of others. There were brief *alapanas* and *swaras* too on the stage and conversations too were in *im promptu* songs. People thronged in thousands and with avaricious assiduity learnt most of the songs. Even boys, beggars and servant-maids delighted in singing them. Music pervaded all sections and functions. Dramas contributed not a little to the spread and assimilation of classical music. Dramas used the auspicious *mangalam* to herald prosperity. Actors were inspired with *manodharma* and the involved audience reacted with responsive acclamation.

Several of the super stars fell a prey to bacchanalian ways and there was also a crude belief that he who drank most brought out the best!

Puranic themes monopolised dramas, social themes coming up later. The 'waist-twisting' dance element was not there; what lambadis did for a paisa is done now for lakhs! The curse of 'oosh, oosh' type of absurd violence with the hero/heroine putting down hundreds like flies was also not there. Classical music enlightened, elevated and enthralled. With scientific advancements in *arohana,* dramatic excellence is in *avarohana* with classical music as the prime casualty.

A Joke Of MDR! Memorable *Kāpi* Raga:

In one of his concerts, M.D. Ramanathan sang a brief alapana of *Kapi raga.* Violinist M. Chandrasekharan made it most memorable with his short but sweet depiction of the raga drawing a hefty round of applause. M.D. Ramanathan commented:

'Ay, it was *Kāpi* I sang;
You played and made it Neskāpi'.

A thunderous applause greeted it.

— K.V. Anantakrishnan, Trivandrum in *Sruti*

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Catur (four) *Varnas* Of Musicians:

He who sings in strict conformity with *sampradaya* with due emphasis on *sahitya* and *sangita bhava* dedicating his music to Almighty as *Karma Yogi* is *uttama.*

He who sings for popularity, name and fame adapting *sahitya* and *sangita* to subserve those ends is *madhyama.*

He who sings for gain and gain alone is *adhama.*

He who subverts the divine role of music to achieve base, immoral, irreligious or criminal ends is *adhamādhama.*

— MNR

Titles & Honours:

Some are born to receive honours and titles and some have them thrust on their selves while some run after with or without success. When a high honour is conferred on a dignitary artiste, how does he react? Here is what T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) said in his acceptance speech on the conferment of Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948:

> 'When I began to think of what I should say to you this evening, I wished only to express very simply my appreciation of the high honour which the Swedish Academy has thought fit to confer on me. But to do this adequately proved no simple task; my business is with words; yet the words were beyond my command! Merely to indicate that I was aware of having received the highest international honour would be only to say what everyone knows already. To profess my own unworthiness would be to cast doubt upon the wisdom of the Academy; to praise the Academy might suggest that I, as a literary critic, approved the recognition given to myself as a poet! May I therefore ask that it be taken for granted that I experienced, on learning of this award to myself, all the normal emotions of exaltation and vanity, that any human being might be expected to feel at such a moment, with enjoyment of the flattery and exasperation at the inconvenience of being turned overnight into a public figure?... Since the Nobel award is different in kind to any other, the expression of one's feelings calls for resources which language cannot supply...'

How did our vidwans feel, react and behave when they were blest with the title of Sangita Kalanidhi?

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Egomaniacs!

> 'I feel it difficult to understand or tolerate the antics of my hus. He insists on washing my jewels only in pure Ghazipur rosewater! Where am I to go for it!'
>
> 'Oosh! What an angel he is! I envy you, dear. My man runs delirious when he sees me cleaning jewels! He shouts, "Will you throw them away or not?"

That was the hot gossip in a club for fair sex. In 1969, a child of about thirty months identified ragas in open house of an august assembly. That is now history. Recently, when the temperature crossed 32° celsius, at a concert, the vocalist was introduced that as a child of 18 months, she had identified ragas, etc.!

A *puranic* story mentions that a babe in womb recited *mantras*! Does anyone believe it? But the entire assembly accepted the version of the 18-month baby-prodigy's case and applauded it too!

Aśōkāvādana - Legendary Work Of 1st Century A.D. :

Aśokāvādana, translated into Chinese in the 1st Century and 5th Century A.D., contains legends on Aśoka in sanskrit. As Buddha set foot on the threshold stone of the city-gate of Rajagriha, miracles occurred:

> '... the earth becomes faultless... The blind, the dumb, the dull, all regain their senses and untouched musical instruments play delighting all.'
>
> — Source: Pradip Bhattacharya, I.A.S., in *The Heritage* 9.3.1987.

(Bharat was congenitally incapable of visualising anything *sans* music - vocal and instrumental - even in legends!)

No *Varnams* In Kannada!

'Composing a *varnam* calls for scholarship in language, expertise in music and the techniques of dance. Great composers like the Tanjore Quartette spent a life-time to produce a few masterpieces. Those *varnams* still remain unequalled. And the stalwarts were aware that fine arts knew no barriers of language. The credit for adapting some popular *Dasara Padas* for dance should go to the all-time great, T. Balasaraswati. The repertoire of many of our dancers abound with *padams, javalis* and *varnams* in telugu and tamil. *Varnams* in kannada should happen spontaneously. They cannot be made to order.'

— S.N. Chandrasekhar in *Phoenix*

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Ekaika Kriti Rāgas: Ample Venue Open To *Vāggēyākāras!*

Prof. S.R. Janakiraman, under the auspices of the Music Academy, Madras, gave a lecture-demonstration on the above. Ragas in each of which only one kriti has been composed were listed out for reference.

The suitability of such ragas could be explored for composing additional songs. Just as bye-pass roads are opened for meeting heavy traffic, these ragas could be availed of if found suitable relieving the major *rakti* ragas from further imposts.

Skipping *Charanas!*

'Songs of Tyagaraja have many *charanas*...But all of them are in the same *dhatu* or musical setting; therefore the performing artist sings only one or two *charanas* - the first and the last, often only the final one (with *mudra*). The musicians do not even know the other *charanas.* This skipping cannot be done in the kritis of Muthuswamy Diksitar, because of the difference in musical setting.'

— Dr. V. Raghavan

It is just the case of the Express skipping intermediate stations!

Unique Concert Commencement:

At *bhajans* and *kalakṣēpams,* there would be frequent *pundarikāms* (salutations to deities like Paramesa, etc.) Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar used to commence his concerts with a hefty but melodious *'Namah Pārvatipatayē'.* Could not present-day musicians adopt it?

'At Tiruvidaimarudur Big temple, Pattinathar and Bhadragiri used to instal themselves at the eastern and western towers. Even so, at Tiruvaiyaru, Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar and Patnam Subramania Ayyar, the greatest performing artiste - composers of Carnatic music lived near the eastern and the western gates of the big temple.'

—Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar

Humility:

Professional jealousy is well known. Here are some to the contra:

Pushpavanam was a dazzling hero of the concert stage. He sat through the concert of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar. Pushpavanam, the melody king, was delighted and said:

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'One can ascertain the depth of the ocean; but it is impossible to find the depth of *Anna's sangita jnāna!*' (Anna is a respectful term used for Ayyar.)

The veteran Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar performed Sita Kalyanam harikatha at Mannargudi, the celebrated Parithiyur Krishna Sastrigal gave vent to his exaltation thus:

'I have performed this theme myself many times;
but you have brought out the actual episode as
it happened at Mithila!'

—Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar

War of the Titans: The Disturbing Applause:

Flautist Sarabha Sastrigal and Violinist Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar were recognised stalwarts with profound stature among vidwans and the public. It was a concert in Punarvasu Sabha, Mint Street in Madras in which they (as usual) were present with Sethurama Rao on mridangam.

They were days when applause was a rare commodity and had to be earned hard. The tennis-court practice of applauding each and every *kriti, alapana, swara,* etc. was yet to enter the concert hall. Krishna Ayyar got his applause first when he handled *Khamboji* with his usual eclat. (Sarabha, it may be remembered, had according to mythology conquered Nrisimha.) Here, Sarabha Sastri unleashed the pallavi with such vehemence that there was a hectic applause and it led to the concert being extended for two hours more.

Percussion maestro demonstrates:

The concert in the sabha was half-way through. It was suspended for the sponsor-Chief Guest's speech. When he finished, the sabha authorities commenced their speeches to thank him. Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. T.K. Murthy, who was providing accompaniment to the vocalist, laid aside his mridangam, stood up, tossed up and put on his upper cloth *(angavastram)* and said that he could not be waiting endlessly with his instrument while speeches were going on *ad infinitum.* Speeches ended abruptly and he was pacified. He sat down and the concert continued.

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Melodic Rains: Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar:

'When Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar released the disc of the music of his disciple, Gita Subramaniam, he said,

> "I did not know upto now this raga *Chandrakounz* in which she has sung. Hence she has become my guru!"

Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar has gratefully acknowledged that Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar and his guru Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar used to recommend him for concerts and that had helped him to ascend the ladder of success easily. Why, the position is not different now since some vidwans recommend the cases of their wives and children exhibiting that they have more family attachments *(kudumba pāsam)* than passion for music *(sangita pāsam)!'*

—Chandilyan

Mela Ragamalika:

Venkatamakhin brought out the concept and scheme of 72 *Melakarta Ragas.* Independently, as it is suggested, Govindacharya brought out a refined scheme. While Muthuswamy Dikshitar looked up to the scheme of his ancestor, Venkatamakhin (which unfortunately lay unnoticed till then in the labyrinths of attics of some families), Tyagaraja has followed Govindacharya's, it is said.

The first *ragamalika* incorporating the 72 *mela ragas* was composed by Lavani Venkata Rao, maratha scholar and poet in Thanjavur Court, in praise of Sakharama Saheb, son-in-law of the ruler. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar gave it music and sang it. But he composed in sanskrit another in praise of the Lord of Tiruvaiyaru, Sri Pranatarthihara which is now in vogue.

It was first published with notation by Adyar Library. The composer's disciple Prof. T.S. Sabhesa Ayyar published it in telugu with notation. A vidwan from Kallidaikurichi brought out a tamil edition. The Music Academy has brought out a comprehensive variorum edition.

Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi has sung the entire song with chaste adherence to original in a single LP record, cassettes and compact disc. Kadayanallur Venkataraman gave dedicated assistance to ensure meticulous recording of the notation. M.S. Subbulakshmi has gifted the entire royalty to the Academy. The

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LP record and cassettes were released by H.H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, patron-guru of the illustrious artiste and her husband, Sadasivam at Kanchipuram and by Dr. P.C. Alexander, then Governor of Madras at Madras.

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, in his inimitable humorous vein, mentioned that he would have himself sung the song but that he liked Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi, his disciple and Queen of Melody to render it so that the memorable composition of the stalwart, Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar would find echoes at the homes of more rasikas!

Pandit Turns Bandit!

Pandit Ravi Shankar is an internationally accepted maestro. Once pimples appeared on his upper lip and he could have no shaves. So, a rich crop of moustache grew up unhindered. He told a friend:

> 'Look around for me. These days I look more like Ravi Shankar, the bandit rather than Ravi Shankar, the Pandit.'

ODD EVENTS DECIDE CAREERS:

Kaliakudi Natesa Sastrigal went over from Tiruvarur to Chembai (Kerala) to give kālakṣēpam performances. Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar was thirteen and his brother Subrahmanyam was eleven. Viswamitra took away Rama and Lakshmana to fulfil the mission of their advent on earth. Sastrigal likewise spotted the lads and took them with him to Tiruvarur and equipped them with musical skill and performng confidence.

Chidambaranatha Yogi came down and took away Muthuswami Dikshitar to Benares for a five-year sojourn and training there. It had a remarkable inspired impact on the musical efflorescence of Dikshitar.

Saxophone stalwart, Kadri Gopalnath hailed from a family of nagaswara artistes. His father and guru, Thainappan gave him initial training. Then for five years, he had training under N. Gopalakrishna Ayyar, Principal, Kalaniketan, Mangalore. The Principal was a voco-flautist. In his 15th year, Gopalnath was among school boys taken on an excursion to Mysore and he witnessed the famous Mysore Palace Band playing at Brindavan Gardens. Quick was his fascination for the saxophone played by Lakshmi Narasimhaiah of the ensemble. The young boy pressed his father to allow him to take tuitions under him and there ensued a five-year training. And Gopalnath is now the

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unquestioned master saxophone artiste in Classical Carnatic music world. The school excursion decided his elevated future!

Polagam Ramayya, as he then was, while very young, had occasion at Trivandrum to hear the bhajans of Nilakanta Sivan and later the concerts of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar. He did not become their disciple but like Ekalavya had them as *manasikha* gurus and attained the acme of excellence in *bhakti*-soaked compositions in tamil. The beauteous truth is that he was not then well-versed in tamil nor had he any course of tuitions in music! Destiny took the lad from Polagam near the East Coast to Trivandrum with no plan and none to help save Lord Padmanabha there! Papanasam Sivan used to wonder at the ways of the Infinite.

A peep into ancient lore shows Tirugnanasambandar as a child cried on the steps of the tank wherein his father was having his ablutions. Since his father heard the cries not, the Lord and the Devi responded and the latter suckled him! The divine child was the craze of the populace and has left songs of undying grace and charm. Had his father heard the cries of his child, the result would have been different!

The Prince of the Stage, golden-voiced S.G. Kittappa was travelling. He heard her enchanting voice and she was no bewitching beauty. She was singing her untutored songs for a quarter anna (about two paise) to quench her physical hunger. Instantly, the Prince decided that she was not to beg any more; and there was the wedding of melodious souls - brahmin Kittappa and street singer Sundarambal. There ensued a musical partnership on the stage never seen or heard of after them. It was not a wedding of earth and water but of air and fire bound by silken chords of soulful melody - absolute melody! **Has melody too sexes?**

A woman carries a basket of oranges.

'Hello, what is the price per dozen?', someone asks-

'Rs.1000 per dozen!' (The oranges are not really to be offered for sale.)
'Alright, here is your money; give me a dozen!'

This would be only in Fools' Paradise. But such a thing did occur. She was not willing to act in drama or cinema since her Prince Charming and Deliverer was dead. But who would ignore her voice?

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'Madame, we request you to take the role of Nandanar in the film.'
'Well, if you give me a lakh of rupees!'
'Yes, we agree.'

A lakh of rupees for a role in a cinema then was unheard of. She thought that no fool would agree to the figure and expected a flat 'no'. But they acceded to it'. And Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar for his role got just Rs.10,000/- K.B. Sundarambal thus entered the cinema!

Early in 1988, I was browsing throgh books in the British Council Library, Madras. I happened to see Slonimsky's Biographical Dictionary of Western Musicians and similar works of Oxford, Bayers, etc. To my utter amazement, I learnt that Classical Carnatic music and even Indian music had no such biographical work. Since none had done it, I decided to take up the work myself. As T.S. Parthasarathy said, God picks up someone to do specific jobs!

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PART IV

Miscellaneous

Ignorance, Prime Slayer of Ego!

'Sages look upon a *brahmana* endowed with learning and humility,
or a cow, an elephant, a dog or an outcaste with an equal eye.

— *Bhagawad Gita* V.18

a. Dr. T.N. Ramachandran, Padma Bhushan, archaeologist and scholar, was having a chat with Director K. Subramanyam, when matinee idol M.G. Ramachandran dropped in. TNR asked casually, 'Director Sir, who is this gentleman?'

There was visible embarrassment. Trying to salvage the situation, Subramanyam, with his unique cultural artfulness, suggested:

'Oh, you did not recognise him without make-up!'
'Oh, you are a make-up specialist?'
'No, Sir, this is MGR; don't you recognise him?'
'MGR? (With blank expression) what does that stand for?'

(The situation visibly went out of hand. Good old TNR took time to assimilate the identity of M.G. Ramachandran who was not yet in power.)

b. Top star of the screen, Raj Kapoor was on a trans-Atlantic flight. The person sitting next to him received as much special attention as he did. Raj, in a bid to break the ice, said:

'I am Raj Kapoor'
'Very nice meeting you...what do you do?'
'I am in Films'
'Oh! Do you work for Kodak?'
'No Sir, I am an actor. I also produce and direct films.
Sorry, I did not get your name? You visit India often?'
'Well, I live in India. My name is G.D. Birla!'

Source: S. Krishnaswamy

The two incidents 'place' the persons exquisitely giving solid substance to the *Gita* verse cited. Now, one from the world of music. The respected musician boarded the first class compartment and was relaxing. The TTE entered and cast a suspicious glance at him:

'Sir, this is reserved for a doctor. Please vacate.'
'This is reserved for me only. My hosts verified it too.'
'I'm sorry. I know this is for another...Just a second...
He is Dr. Srinivasan, please.'

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar had a hearty laugh recovering from his initial shock. In his usual humorous way, he said:

'Thank you, I am Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasan. I understand you. Because of the appellation "Doctor", you had presumed that the ticket-holder should be only in full suit! Now you see, that there is a doctor in *dhoti* in *panchakaccham too!*'

(The TTE was profuse in his good-natured apologies!)

* * * * * *

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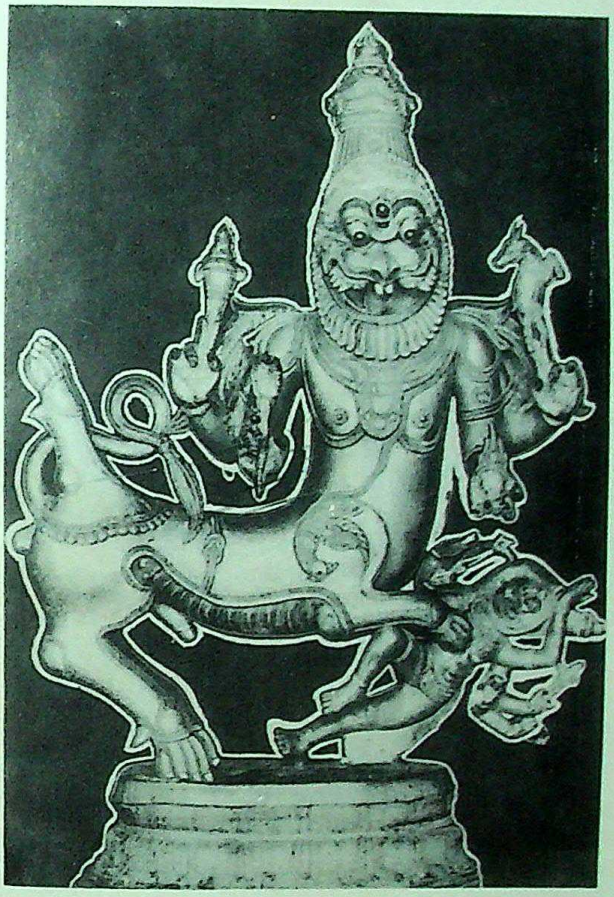

SRI SARABHAMURTI at TIRUBHUVANAM

(Syama Sastri invoked *Sarabhanandana tala* to counter the *Simhanandana tala* of Bobbili Kesavaiah. What has this *Murti* to do with the tala? *Vide* Part I.

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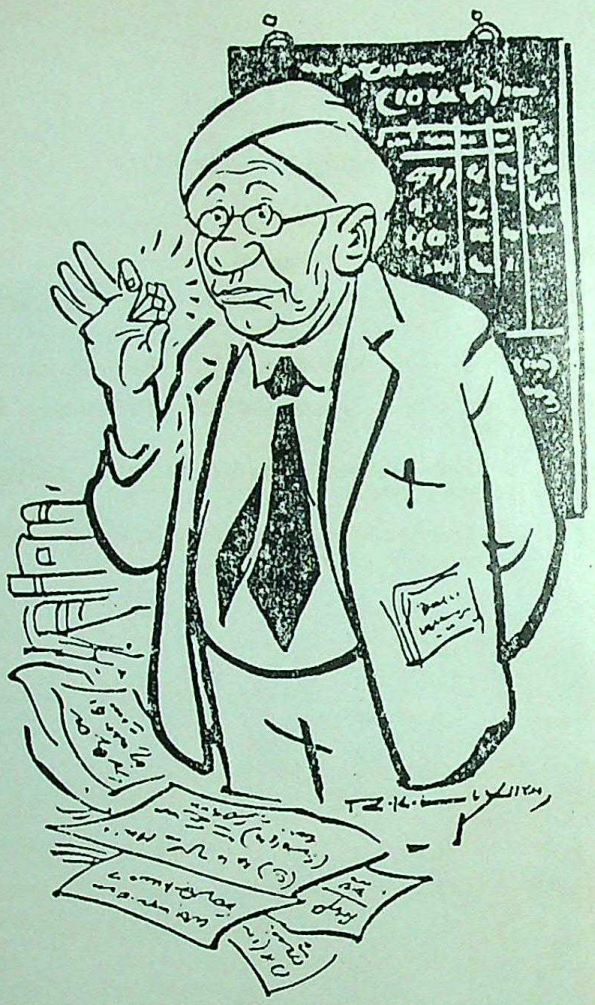

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A

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B

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(Vide Yet Another Garland for others)

Avvaiyar I		I Century AD
Ilango		c. 5th century
Andal		c. 716 - 732
Sērai Arivanar	(Period not identified)	2nd - 9th Century
Jeya Deva		12th Century
Avvaiyar II		12th Century
Purandara Dasa		1484 - 1564
Sri Bodhendra Swamigal		1610 - 1692
Sri Narayana Tirtha Swamigal	1675 - 1745 or 1580 - 1680 or	1610 - 1705
Vijayaraghava Nayak	1630 or	1634 - 1673
Bach		1685 - 1750
Ksetrajna		17th Century
Vijayaraghunatha Raya Tondaiman		1730 - 1769
Pratapa Simha		1739 - 1763
Viralimalai *Kuravanji* author		c. 1750
Mozart		1756 - 1791
Syama Sastri		1762 - 1827
Tulaja II		1763 - 1787
Tyagaraja, Saint		1767 - 1847
Muthuswami Dikshitar		1775 - 1835
Ghanam Krishna Ayyar		1794 - 1854
Maha Bharata Chudamani author		18th Century
Akalanka Govindacharya		18th Century
Tirukuta Rasappa Kavirayar		18th Century
Tillaistanam Rama Ayyangar		18th Century
Tillaistanam Narasimha Bhagavatar		18th Century - (d.1911)
Tillaistanam Panju Bhagavatar		18th Century - (d.1917)
Vedanayakam Pillai		1826 - 1889
Umayalpuram Swami Bhagavatar		1835 - 1930
Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar		1844 - 1893
Vina Seshanna		1850 - 1926
Palani Subramania Bhagavatar		1851 - 1933
Tirukkodikkaval Krishna Ayyar		1857 - 1913
Rabindranath Tagore		1861 - 1941
Veena Dhanammal		1868 - 1938
Sulamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar		1868 - 1943
Tiger Varadachariar		1876 - 1950
Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar		1877 - 1945
Tiruppugal Mani Krishnaswamy Ayyar		1884 - 1967
Veena Shivaramaiah		1888 - 1950
Sir C.V. Raman (Nobel Laureate)		1888 - 1970
Pudukkottai Gopalakrishna Bhagavatar		1892 - 1971
Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu		1893 - 1964
Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Ayyar		1894 - 1947
Nagpur B. Subba Rao		1894
C. Rangiah		1895 - 1984
Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar		1895 - 1960
T. Chowdiah		1895 - 1967
Avudayarkoil Harihara Bhagavatar		1895 - 1975

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Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar	1896 - 1976
Chembai Vaidynatha Bhagavatar	1896 - 1974
Tirumalai Rajamma	1900
Sendamangalam Kesava Bharati	19th Century
Devakottai Sundararaja Ayyangar	1901 - 1970
B.K. Padmanabha Rao	1903 - 1966
D. Subbaramayya	1903 - 1986
Papa Venkatramaiya	1901 - 1972
Titte Krishna Iyengar	1902
R.S. Keshavamurti	1903 - 1982
T.R. Harihara Sarma	1904
Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar	1904 - 1967
Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar	1908
Gnanananda Tirtha	1908
Belakavadi Srinivasa Ayyangar	1910
G.N. Balasubramaniam	1910 - 1965
Palghat Mani	1912 - 1981
A.V. Narayanappa	1912 - 1974
Belakavadi Varadaraja Ayyangar	1912
K.S. Mahadevan	1913
Tiruvaiyaru R. Ramamurthy Ayyar	1913
S.N. Mariappa	1914
Mahadanapuram K. Panchapakesa Bhagavatar	1915
M.S. Selvapulle Iyengar	1915 - 1993
Sathur A.G. Subramaniam	1916 - 1977
C.S. Krishna Ayyar	1916
Kulathur Ramakrishna Sastri	1916
Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi	1916
T.S. Thathachariar	1917
Nallar Rajalakshmi	1917
Swaramurti Venkatanarayana Rao	1917
B.R. Govindaswamy	1917 - 1966
V.V. Ranganathan	1918
T. Ekambaram	c. 1919 - 1995
Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao	1920
Padmacharan (A.V. Krishnamachar)	1920
M.S. Subramaniam	1920
Mysore V. Doreswamy Iyengar	1920
Pathamadi S. Krishnan	1921
Chandrasing	1921
Suchindram S. Krishnan	1921
B. Natarajan	1921
N. Chockamma	1922
M.R. Sankaramurti	1922 - 1993
P.L. Kasinatha Sastri	1922
Srinivasa Uduppah	1923
S.N. Natarajan	1923
T.M. Theagarajan	1923
Namagiripettai Krishnan	1924
S.V. Krishnamurti	1925
Sitalakshmi Venkatesan	1926
Salem G. Desikhan	1926 - 1986
N.S. Vaidyanathan	1926
Bhooma Krishnaswamy	1926
Mali (T.R. Mahalingam)	1926 - 1986
A.D. Zachriah	1927

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Malathi Subramanyam	1927 - 1989
S. Alamelu, Tirukkoilur	1928
B.R. Seshadri	1928
N.G. Rajagopalan	1928
Kollegal Subramanyam	1929
Raghusutha (K.R. Rangachar)	1929
S. Mahadevappah	1930
B.S. Chandrakala	1931
Anoor Ramakrishna	1931 - 1995
Parur R. Venkataraman	1931
N.V. Subramaniam (Saraswati Vaggeyakara)	1933
G.V. Ranganayakamma	1933
Madurai G.S. Mani	1934
Shaila Subramaniam	1934
Neela Ramgopal	1935
Anasuya Kulkarni, H.S.	1936
A.V. Anand	1936
Kalyanapuram R. Aravamudan	1936
S. Pushpa	1936
Arundhati Sarcar	1937
Tanjore S. Kalyanaraman	1937 - 1994
Manda Balaram Sarma	1938
Bangalore S. Mukund	1938
T. Sharada (Tirumalai Sisters)	1938
G.V. Neela	1939
Lalgudi R. Rajalakshmi	1939
Lalitha Navile	1940
Dr. T. Sachi Devi (Tirumalai Sisters)	1940
G.R. Jaya	1940
Dr. T. Srinivasaraghavan	
P.N. Seshagiri Bhagavatar	
M.K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar	
Tirugokarnam Narayanaswamy Ayyar	20th Century
S. Parthasarathi	
S.V. Subbiah Bhagavatar	

No Sons!

Some of the eminent stalwarts had either no issues or had no sons to carry on the traditional dedication to music. For instance, Tyagaraja had just a daughter though he married twice. Muthuswami Dikshitar was married to two ladies but had no progeny. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar had no issues. Veena Shamannah had likewise no progeny! The list is long. Why this drought? They dedicated their lives to music heart and soul and presumably music monopolised their lives.

* * *

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C

ADDENDA & CORRIGENDA
to Books I, II & III

Page No.	Line	For	Read
		***A Garland* - Book I**	
6	10	(b. February 10, 1921)	(1921 - 1992)
7	24	(b. Nov.11, 1893)	(Jany 23, 1893 - 1979)
15	19	—	(b. July 9, 1937)
18	2	(b. 1952)	(b. 30.10.1952)
38	35	(b. Oct 13, 1936)	(Oct 13, 1936 - Feb 9 1996)
50	25	(1868 - Oct 15, 1938)	(May 1868 - Oct 15, 1938)
59	13	(b. 1913)	(1913 - 1985)
61	18	—	(May 2, 1933 - Aug 4, 1988)
74	2	(b. 1921)	(b. August 12, 1921)
80	1	(b. 1912)	(1912 - 1979)
82	22	(b. 1924)	(1924 - May 12, 1993)
85	12	—	(d. August 1994)
87	22	(20th Century)	(1895 - 1975)
101	29	(b. June 2, 1930)	(June 2, 1930 - 1994)
129	33	RAMNAD KRISHNAN (1925 - 1974)	Delete entire line. (Vide pages 144-5 in *Yet Another Garland*)
140	7	(1798 - 1904)	(1798 - 1860)
163	2	(1776 - 1835)	(March 25, 1775 - 1835)
175	18	(13th Century)	(1243 - 1333)
199	2	(Circ. 1890)	(Feb 2, 1892 - June 11, 1944)
204	9	(b. 1913)	(b. Septr. 8, 1913)
215	4	(b. August 17, 1906)	(August 17, 1906 - Nov. 25, 1993)
219	17	(b. August 23, 1913)	(August 23, 1913 - 1990)
231	27	(Circ. 1915)	(c. 1915 - Dec 31, 1993)
233	25	(1622 - 1680 AD)	(1622 - 1680 or 1620 - 1688)
317	22	(b. Aug 21, 1918)	(b. Aug 21, 1918 - Jan 20, 1994)
332	14	(April 4, 1889 - 1975)	(April 4, 1899 - Mar 24, 1975)
339	2	(b. 1833)	(Nov 7, 1893 - June 16, 1970)
340	9	(1845 - 1902)	(1845 - July 31, 1902)
348	27	(b. 1929)	(1929 - Sep 17, 1994)
377	21	(d. 1917)	(1845 - 1917)
390	13	(b. 1894 N.M.)	(1894 - April 13, 1947)
391	2	(b. Sep. 1, 1896)	(Sep 1, 1896 - Octr. 16, 1974)
394	6	(b. June 28, 1928)	(June 28, 1928 - July 12, 1994)
420	20	(b. Nov, 10, 1910)	(1910 - April 1993)
437	36	(b. 1931)	(b. March 15, 1931)

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Page No.	Line	For	Read
		***Another Garland* - Book II**	
87	29	(b. Jan 23, 1893)	(Jan 23, 1893 - 1979)
109	20	(b. 1918)	(March 8, 1918 - 1986)
110	2	(b. Nov 5, 1912)	(Nov 5, 1912 - Aug 6, 1996)
130	34	(b. Septr 24, 1915)	(Septr 24, 1915 - 1987)
131	13	(b. 1935)	(b. Aug 2, 1931)
134	31	(Jany 14, 1915 - Oct 1, 1992)	(Jan 14, 1916 - Oct 1, 1992)
151	3	(20th Cent)	(b. Decr.6, 1950)
160	2	(b. 1916)	(b. May 22 1914)
161	2	(b. 1906)	(1906 - 1994)
198	37	(b. Septr. 1902-)	(Septr 1902 - 1970)
201	3	(b. 1930)	(b. 1960)
220	12	(b. Septr 26, 1908)	(Septr 26, 1908-1987)
226	33	20th Century	(b. Septr 27, 1904)
241	13	(b. 1916)	(b. Nov 14, 1916)
243	14	(December 15, 1883)	(December 15, 1883 - 1951)
265	9	(b. June 28, 1908)	(June 28, 1908 - Novr 7, 1993)
276	17	(b. April 2, 1914)	(April 2, 1914 - April 21, 1992)
314	19	(b. Decr 15, 1913)	(Decr 15, 1913 - 1978)
322	12	(b. 1916)	(July 1919 - 1987)
327	18	(b. 1920)	(b. Febry 21, 1920)
339	33	(1895..)	(1895 - 1964)
344	14	(1901 - No more)	(1901 - 1971)
		***Yet Another Garland* - Book III**	
129	11	(b. Nov 11, 1918)	(Nov.11, 1918 - 1996)
137	2	(b. c 1917)	(b. 1970)
399	23	1917	1970
403	8	1930	1960

GNB Taught so!

'Being a busy concert artiste, G.N. Balasubramaniam took only students who had quick grasping power. (It should be remembered that he was well qualified himself and was the son of a reputed headmaster of a big high school). Spoon-feeding he would never do. He taught kritis thoroughly. Disciples should closely follow his rendition at concerts and imbibe his style of *raga alapana*. He guided and suggested and had no faith in teaching.'

— Source: Trichur V. Ramachandran in *Layamani Layam*

* * *

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D

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(*Note:* Vide *Yet Another Garland* for consolidated index for Book I, II & III)

Why 12 notes be made into 16 notes?

'The analytical mind of Venkatamakhin, author of *Caturdandi Prakāśika* came to the conclusion that from the twelve notes of an octave a maximum of 72 *melakartas* could be formed. His argument is like this. Suppose there are four brothers. The eldest and the youngest cannot change identity of their roles. But the middle two brothers have each a dual role of being elder to one and younger to another. Even so, R,G,D and N have each three notes while M has two and S and P have one each being permanent notes...The Katapayadi Sutra used by Venkatamakhin to identify the *melakarta* number was originally used in *Vedic* Mathematics.'

— Vainika C.K. Shankara Narayana Rao
in his book *Veena.*

* * *

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Royal Patronage to Music

On the death of Tippu Sultan, the old royal family returned to the Mysore gadi. Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1794-1868) was a linguist, author, patron of arts and composer. He authored the works, *Swara Cūdāmani, Sārasangraha Bharata* and *Sri Tatva Nidhi.* He was the originator of the musical form in Karnataka called *javali* depicting *vairagya.* Chamaraja Wodeyar (1868-1894) was a musician himself and he inspired the founding of the Kannada theatrical group in 1880. Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1884-1940) was a patron of Carnatic, Hindustani and Western music. Music attained its peak importance during his period.

— B.V.K. Sastri

* * *

Call it vandalism, it's not Eccentricity!

Mali (T.R. Mahalingam) was a regular feature at the annual Ganesa Music Festival at Mavalli. Mali concluded his recital with *mangalam. Mangaḷahārati* was offered to the deity and was taken around for the audience' satisfaction. When the priest came before him, Mali started fumbling in his pocket. The priest, expecting *dakṣina,* waited with the *mangaḷahārati* plate. Suddenly Mali whipped out a cigarrette and started lighting it in the *mangaḷahārati* itself. Great commotion ensued and people became wild. Mali was hurriedly taken out through a back lane to avoid injury to his person.

— B.V.K. Sastry.

* * *

MANGAḶA

"May there be victorious Mangaḷa, ever auspicious Mangaḷa,
To the Lord who is benevolent
To the whole world . . . who honours merit. . . "

— *Karunarasakshaya (Ghanta)* of Tyagaraja.

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Sri T.T. Vasu, President, Music Academy, Madras releasing *Yet Another Garland*.
Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. T.K. Murti receiving the first copy.
— Courtesy: *Dinamalar*

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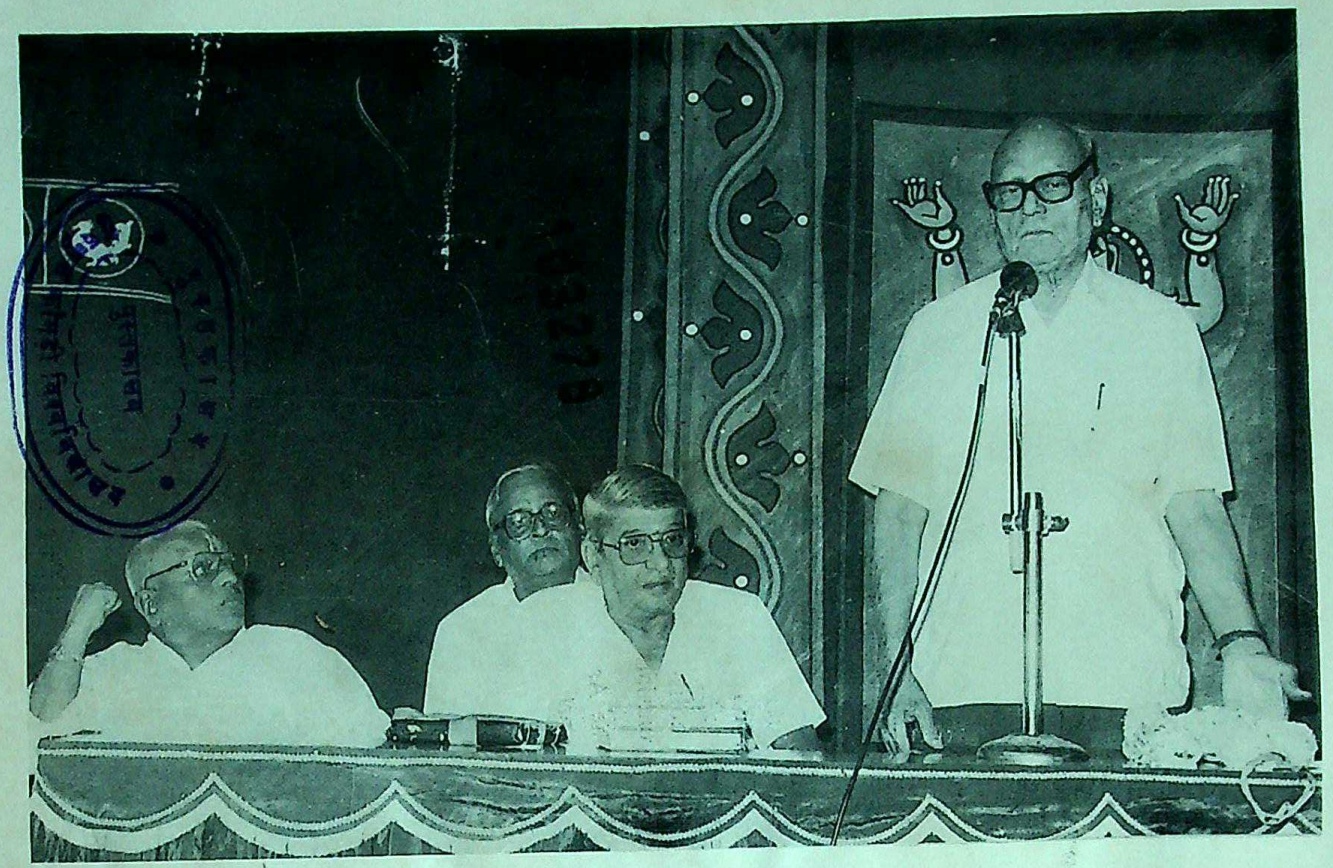

Yet Another Garland was released by Sri T.T.Vasu on December 18, 1994.
Sri T.S. Parthasarathy Secretary, Music Academy & eminent musicologist introducing the book.
— Courtesy: *Dinamalar*

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Compiled 2002-2003

Compiled 1999-2000

ON THE AUTHOR

N. Rajagopalan, born on the day of Deepavali at Aduthurai, retired from the Indian Administrative Service on October 31, 1981.

Rajagopalan had earlier taken lead roles in amateur dramas. Sangita Kalanidhi Papanasam Sivan took him as disciple but it ended when the maestro left Madras to concentrate on films. After long gaps, Rajagopalan resumed his training successively under Salem Subbarama Bhagavater and Tiruchy P.R. Sundararajan but could not continue. He imbibed his love of music from his mother who would sing melodiously even in her seventies and his deep sense of dignity, discipline and duty from his saintly father.

His ambition has been to 'gazette' and bring to focus the valiant lives and ever-lasting contribution of composers, musicians, musicologists and hymnodists of the past and the present for the inspiration of students, researchers and music-lovers and for the information of musicians and teachers. Following up the works *A Garland*, *Another Garland* and *Yet Another Garland*, he presents this *Fragrant Garland*. These four volumes constituting the Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers and Musicians cover 1400 lives.

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MELAKARTA CHART

of Venkatamakhin with Katapayadi Formula

KATAPAYADI FORMULA

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Kadi-ādi	K	Kh	G	Gh	Ng	Ci	Chh	J	Jh	Jn
Tadi-ādi	T	TH	D	Dh	Nn	T	TH	D	Dh	N
Padi-ādi	P	Ph	B	Bh	M					
Yadi-ādi	Y	R	L	V	S	SH	SH	H		

Example

To find the serial number of Mayamalavagaula

The first two syllables are

Ma(ma) = 5 and Ya(ya) = 1 Value = 5 1 Reverse this number

[illegible]